

THE RISK OBSERVER

Safety Information for Residents

FIRE PREVENTION – CANDLES AND CHILDREN

Burning Candles and Incense

According to the NFPA, most candle fires occurred after candles were left unattended, abandoned or inadequately controlled; or occurred when some form of combustible material was left or came too close to the candle. Other candle fires were started by people (usually children) playing with the candle; and some started after the candle user fell asleep.

- Extinguish all candles and incense when leaving the room or going to sleep.
- Keep candles and incense away from items that can catch fire (e.g. clothing, books, paper, curtains, upholstery, and flammable decorations).
- Use candle and incense holders that are sturdy, won't tip over easily, are made from a material that can't burn and are large enough to collect dripping wax and ashes.
- Place candle and incense holders on a sturdy, uncluttered surface and do not use candles in places where they could be knocked over by children or pets.
- Don't place lit candles or incense in windows, where blinds and curtains can close over them.
- Keep candles, incense, and all open flames away from flammable liquids.
- Maintain a short flame on candles by keeping the wick trimmed to one-quarter inch. Extinguish taper and pillar candles when they get to within two inches of the holder or decorative material. Votives and containers should be extinguished before the last half-inch of wax starts to melt.
- Avoid candles with combustible items embedded in them. Try to avoid carrying a lit candle. Don't use a lit candle when searching for items in a confined space.
- Never use a candle for a light when checking pilot lights or fueling equipment such as a kerosene heater or lantern. The flame may ignite the fumes.

Children Playing with Fire

Children have a natural curiosity about fire, so we need to teach them how dangerous fire can be. They need to understand that fire can hurt them, or somebody else can get hurt or even killed. Fire can also destroy anything in which it comes in contact. Once fire is started, it can spread very, very fast.

Adults need to play their role by maintaining a safe environment for their children. Matches and lighters need to be stored out of a child's reach, preferably in a locked cabinet. Candles should be up high, out of a child's reach. Children should never be left alone, even when sleeping, in a room where a candle is burning. NEVER allow children or teenagers to have candles in their bedrooms, which is where almost half of all candle-fires originate.

Children should be taught:

1. NEVER play with matches or lighters. Lighters and Matches are tools for grown-ups ONLY, and are NOT TOYS.
2. If they find any matches or lighter, tell a grown-up RIGHT AWAY