

USE CANDLES WITH CARE – WHEN YOU GO OUT, BLOW OUT!
Fire Prevention Week, October 9 – 15, 2005

“Candles, as pretty as they may be, are a growing cause of home fires – and home fire deaths”, warns **John Reich, Deputy Director of the Division of Fire and Life Safety**. Open flames can easily ignite nearby materials, spreading fire throughout your home in a matter of minutes. Fire is fast – that’s why every home should have a working smoke alarm and a planned and practiced exit plan.

If you use candles, pay close attention to a few simple rules:

- Place candles on stable furniture in sturdy holders that won’t tip over and that are big enough to collect dripping wax.
- Keep candles away from things that can catch fire, such as clothing, books, paper, curtains or decorations.
- Extinguish all candles when leaving the room or going to sleep.
- Discard taper and pillar candles when they get within two inches of the holder or decorative material. Discard votive and filled candles before the last half-inch of wax starts to melt.
- Never put candles in windows or near doorways where drafts could bring flammable materials in contact with the open flame.
- Avoid using candles for light sources during power outages.
- Always stay in the room where candles are being burned.

Using candles in the home is on the increase (seven out of ten households are reported as using candles), and so is the number of home fires they cause. Two out of five candle –caused home fires start in the bedroom.

Although highly discouraged, if you must use candles in the bedroom, be especially careful to:

- Keep candles at least one foot from bedding, curtains and blinds, wallpaper, upholstered furniture and other combustible materials.
- Place candles away from table edges where they could easily be knocked over.
- Don’t allow children or teens to burn candles in their bedrooms.
- Supervise children around burning candles and remind them that candles are tools, not toys.

The Division of Fire and Life Safety, along with the National Association of State Fire Marshals, NFPA, and the state's fire service, encourage everyone to, "Make Fire Safety Your Responsibility," by taking a few extra safety precautions:

Increase your chances of surviving a fire –

Have working smoke alarms:

- Make sure smoke alarms are installed on each level of your home and outside all sleeping areas.
- Test them monthly and replace batteries when needed.
- If your smoke alarm is more than 10 years old, they should be replaced.

Prepare and Practice an Escape Plan:

- Identify at least two ways out of each room
- Identify a meeting place outside the home
- Practice your plan at least every six months with every member of your family

Take advantage of modern technology by installing a residential sprinkler system that contains or puts the fire out.