

# Use Candles with Care



**Fire Prevention Week – October 9-15, 2005**

## **MOST CURRENT STATISTICS**

*In 2002, an estimated 18,600 candle fires in residential structures resulted in 130 deaths and 1,375 injuries. Of these candle fires:*

- ✦ 39% occurred in bedrooms.
- ✦ 37% occurred between the hours of 5 p.m. and 11 p.m.
- ✦ 75% occurred in single family homes or duplexes.
- ✦ 21% occurred in multifamily dwellings.
- ✦ Months with more incidents of candle-caused residential fires are October through March, with a dramatic increase during the December – January holidays to 23%.

### *In all residential structure fires in 2002:*

- ✦ Bedding and upholstered furniture were the materials first ignited in 38% of child fatality fires, with lighters and candles being the primary heat sources.
- ✦ For fires that resulted in injuries to one or more children, the leading cause was open flame (25%).
- ✦ Open flame was the second leading fire cause that resulted in fatalities of one or more children (28%) and one or more older adults (19%).

**Sources:** Data from 2002 National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) and National Fire Protection Association's (NFPA) Fire Loss in the United States During 2002.

## **TRAGIC AND PREVENTABLE EXAMPLES**

- ✦ Three unattended children **died** in a fire that was started by a burning candle.
- ✦ A lighted candle ignited the hair of a person who fell asleep on a couch causing only minor burns – but the ensuing fire **killed** a 9 year old and **severely injured** another family member.
- ✦ A student **died** when a lighted candle ignited her bedding.
- ✦ Eleven members of a family **died** in a fire when a lighted candle ignited a mattress.
- ✦ Two children **died** in a fire when a lighted candle rolled under the Christmas tree.
- ✦ A mother and young baby **died** when a burning candle used for religious observances ignited cabinetry.

**FACT:** *The majority of candle fires result from human error and negligence.*

## **CANDLE SAFETY TIPS**

- ✦ Avoid using lighted candles.
- ✦ If you do use candles, ensure they are in sturdy metal, glass, or ceramic holders and placed where they cannot be easily knocked down.
- ✦ Keep candles out of the reach of children and pets.
- ✦ Set a good example by using matches, lighters, and fire carefully.
- ✦ Children should never be allowed to play with matches, lighters or candles.
- ✦ Never put candles on a Christmas tree.
- ✦ Never leave the house with candles burning.
- ✦ Extinguish candles after use.
- ✦ Establish a fire-safe home, especially a safe sleeping environment.
- ✦ **And NEVER leave burning candles unattended!**

## **FIRE PREVENTION & SAFETY LINKS**

[www.usfa.fema.gov/safety/](http://www.usfa.fema.gov/safety/)

[www.usfa.fema.gov/subjects/fireprev/](http://www.usfa.fema.gov/subjects/fireprev/)

[www.usfa.fema.gov/kids/](http://www.usfa.fema.gov/kids/)

[www.firesafety.gov](http://www.firesafety.gov)

[www.nfpa.org](http://www.nfpa.org)

Factsheet sponsored by the U.S. Fire Administration,  
Department of Homeland Security

October 2005