



**Northern Ireland  
Fire & Rescue Service**

**Protecting Our Community**

## **COMMUNITY INFORMATION BULLETIN No. 15**

### **CANDLE FIRE SAFETY**

Candles have become significantly more popular around the home; whether for festive reasons, relaxation purposes or simply to create a pleasing scent, their use and the potential fire hazards that candles can pose, should never be understated. Over recent years Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service has seen an increase in the number of candle related incidents that it has attended.

It is vitally important to remember that a candle is an open flame in your home which will ignite any combustible material that it comes into contact with. Following the fire safety advice below will help to keep you and your family safe from fire:

- Always keep a burning candle within sight. Extinguish all candles when leaving a room or before going to sleep; be sure the wick ember is no longer glowing.
- Never burn a candle on or near anything that can catch fire; keep burning candles away from furniture, curtains, bedding, carpets, books, paper, flammable decorations, etc.
- Keep burning candles out of the reach of children and pets.
- Trim candlewicks to ¼ inch each time before burning; long or crooked wicks can cause uneven burning and dripping.
- Always use a candle-holder specifically designed for candle use; the holder should be heat resistant, sturdy, and large enough to contain any drips or melted wax.
- Be sure the candle-holder is placed on a stable, heat-resistant surface; this can help prevent heat damage to underlying surfaces and prevent glass containers from breaking.
- Always read and follow the manufacturer's use and safety instructions carefully. Don't burn a candle longer than the manufacturer recommends.
- Keep burning candles away from drafts, vents, ceiling fans and air currents; this will help prevent rapid, uneven burning and avoid flame flare-ups and sooting. Drafts can also blow nearby lightweight items into the flame where they could catch fire.
- Don't burn a candle all the way down. Extinguish the flame if it comes too close to the holder or container. For a margin of safety, discontinue burning a candle when 2 inches of wax remains or ½ inch if in a container.
- Never touch or move a burning candle or container candle when the wax is liquid.
- Place burning candles at least three inches apart from one another; this helps ensure they don't melt one another, or create their own drafts to cause improper burning.
- Use a snuffer to extinguish a candle; it's the safest way to prevent hot wax spatters.
- Never extinguish candles with water; the water can cause the hot wax to spatter and might cause a glass container to break.
- Be very careful if using candles during a power outage. Flashlights and other battery-powered lights are safer sources of light during a power failure.
- Extinguish a candle if it repeatedly smokes, flickers, or the flame becomes too high as these indicate it is not burning properly. Cool, trim the wick, then check for drafts before relighting.
- Never use a candle as a night light.

#### Tea lights

It is also very important to stress the dangers associated with the use of tea lights in particular. Tea light candles can reach extremely high temperatures and the foil container becomes extremely hot.

- Always burn tea lights in or on a suitable, non-flammable holder on a heat resistant surface.
- Never place tea lights directly onto plastic surfaces such as TVs, computers or baths.
- Never leave a tea light unattended and remember to extinguish before going to sleep.

Remember if a fire starts, get everyone out of the property and close all doors behind you. Dial 999 and ask for the Fire & Rescue Service.

For further information phone 028 9266 4221. [www.nifrs.org](http://www.nifrs.org)



**#STOPfire**