



## Fire Safety for Children Candle Safety

Practice fire safety for children and reduce the chance of a fire starting from a child playing with candles by following these guidelines.

While deaths from residential fires have been nearly cut in half from 4,500 in 1980 to 2,660 in 1998, **those caused by candles have increased by 750 percent.**

In most cases, candles caused house fires when they were left unattended, tipped over and ignited nearby combustibles. Almost half of home candle fires start in the bedroom. Mattresses or bedding are the most common items that ignite, followed by furniture (dressers, desks, and tables) and then curtains. Tea lights and tapers are common culprits in candle fires.

**A child playing with the candle itself or near the candle is one of the biggest contributors to candle fires.** Faced with fire, many children hide in a closet or under a bed leading to tragic fatalities. In fact, children under age 5 have a fire death rate more than twice the national average.

"Candles are no longer used for the occasional dinner party. In fact, only a small percent of candle fires start in dining rooms," said CPSC Chairman Ann Brown. "Candle sales are booming and families are lighting candles in their living rooms, family rooms, dens and bathrooms. Reduce the chance of a fire, by following these simple safety tips."

- Keep matches, lighters and candles away from children.
- Never leave burning candles unattended.

- Keep combustible materials away from candles.
- Don't put candles in a location where children or pets could knock them down.
- Use only non-flammable candle holders.
- Always trim the wicks before lighting.

House fires have dropped from 655,000 in 1980 to 332,300 in 1998, the latest year for which data is available. In contrast, house fires caused by candles have increased, from 8,500 in 1980 to 12,900 in 1998.

Fires from candles have increased dramatically, but they are preventable. Fire safety for children can be taught at an early age to prevent child injuries, fire deaths and firesetting accidents.

*Source: U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission and U.S. Fire Administration*