

## CANDLE FIRE SAFETY

"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."



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 dramatically. Candle deaths increased 750 percent from 1980 (20 deaths) to 1998 (170 deaths). In most cases, candles were left unattended, tipped over and ignited nearby combustibles. A child playing with or near the candle is one of the biggest contributors to candle fires. Almost half of home candle fires start in the bedroom, many of which originate with candles.



A new type - "gel candle" - has appeared on the market since the early 1990's. The US Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) reports that gel candles produce a higher burning flame than regular wax candles. The increase in flame also produces higher heat, which can crack or break decorative glass containers. In some instances the heat from the gel candle has shattered the container. Everything the gel spills on becomes a new "wick" and will burn rapidly. There have been voluntary recalls of some of these type products. More specific information about the items recalled can be found at <http://www.cpsc.gov> on the Internet.



Fires from candles are preventable. You can reduce the chance of a fire, by following simple safety tips."

- Keep matches, lighters and candles out of the reach of 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 over.
- Use only noncombustible candle holders.
- Always trim the wicks before lighting.

Candles can add warmth and ambience to a room but they can turn deadly if not handled properly and with due caution.

Check the National Candle Association's web site at <http://www.candles.org/> or Candle-Safety.org at <http://www.candle-safety.org/> for additional safety information.