

How many times have you lit a candle in the evening and then gone to bed only to realize the next morning that you never extinguished it? It happens more often than you think, and it makes this discussion on candle safety important, especially at this time of year.

You may have received a few scented candles for Christmas and you are eager to try them out. According to Fire Prevention Canada, most candle fires begin in the bedroom.

Furniture and combustible accessories are also the first items in the home to catch fire from a lit candle. Here are some tips to enjoy your candles safely this winter:

1. Make sure candles are not left unattended. This is probably the hardest one to remember. Candles are silent and it can be easy to forget they are burning. Set your watch or phone to a 1-2 hour buzzer to make sure you won't forget.

2. Do a quick check of any burning candles before you fall asleep. Connect it to part of your

Being Safe Around An Open Flame

By: Joel Layman



pre-sleep routine - when locking the door, brushing your teeth or some other habit that will remind you that a candle is burning. Better yet, once you light a candle, put something on your pillow to remind you to check to make sure the candle is out.

3. Choose a flashlight instead of a candle when you need light. While candles do provide light, they can easily become hazards if you're using them to "find your way" around your home. If you trip, the consequences of hot wax and an open flame could be pretty harmful. Keep a flashlight

in a place nearby so you can use it when necessary.

4. Keep candles far enough away from other burnable objects. These include tablecloths or table runners, other items on a counter or purses and bags that may be near the burning candle. Even if it's a glass jar, make sure it is clear - at least a foot on every side - of anything burnable. Note: also be careful to check there is nothing over the candle that could catch on fire as well.

5. Keep candles safe from being knocked over by children,

pets or sudden drafts (ie: door or activity.) A wagging tail can be dangerous for the dog and your home if it comes in contact with an open flame. Keep candles out of reach of children - this includes on shelves where they might be able to climb and pull them down. Small tealights can also be easily knocked over because they don't have the weight of larger candles, so be mindful of candle placement near doors and active areas in the home.

Finally, remind any students away at college or seniors in residential living of this candle awareness. Everyone's home should enjoy the scent of a candle, and the safety of it.

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