

## Holiday Candles Are Tools to Use With Care

In our injury prevention training workshops, Fireproof Children/Prevention First teaches that matches, lighters, and other ignition materials are "adult tools only."

It's easy to forget that the lovely candles used in thousands of homes during the winter holidays are ignition materials too. To keep your holidays safe, candles should be used by adults only, and used with care.

This year the National Fire Protection Association updated its report on home candle fires. The statistics are disturbing. From 1999 to 2001, the number of home candle fires continued to climb. In fact, the number of reported home fires started by candles jumped 15% from 2000 to 2001, to a new high of more than 18,000 fires.

December is the most dangerous month for candle fires, with almost twice the number of home candle fires of an average month. Christmas is the peak day, followed by New Year's Day and Christmas Eve.

Children have the highest risk of death from candle fires. Children aged 5-9 years old face a risk of death from a home candle fire 2.5 times that of the general population, and more than twice the risk of death from fires of all causes combined. Children under 5 face the second highest risk.

For a safer holiday season:

- Keep candles, along with all ignition materials, out of reach of children.
- Never leave a room with a candle still burning.
- Declare all bedrooms "no candle" zones. Forty-one percent of the home candle fires reported from 1999-2001 started in bedrooms, and a mattress or bedding was the first item ignited in 26% of home candle fire deaths.
- Keep candles well away from any items that can catch fire, including cloth, books, paper, curtains, Christmas tree, and decorations. During December, decorations are the leading item first ignited during candle fires.
- Place candles in sturdy holders, away from spots where they could be knocked over by children or pets.
- Keep exits clear of decorations. Be sure everyone in your home knows your fire escape routes and that there is nothing blocking these routes.

For more information:

The NFPA brochure "Candle With Care" is available at [www.nfpacatalog.org](http://www.nfpacatalog.org).

**Safe for play! keep away!** and other games available at [www.playsafebesafe.com](http://www.playsafebesafe.com) and [www.ninosseguroscontentos.com](http://www.ninosseguroscontentos.com) are a fun way for kids to learn which items are for adult use only