

Candle-Proof Your Home From Accidents

Using wax or paraffin candles for home decoration adds an exciting touch to most rooms of any house. Available in many attractive styles, colors, and designs, candles serve a number of important functions by adding beauty, fragrance, and comfort to our dwellings and even some offices. Yet, like anything else, candles can bring along some unwanted baggage when we buy them for home use. Here are a few safety tips to keep in mind when lighting up a candle or two for that special occasion.

1. Buy candles without lead wicks. Many commercial candles are made with a lead wire wick that burns when the candle is lit. But the smoke from combustible lead can be toxic, especially if an area's inhabitants are frequently exposed to it. One or more recent studies have shown that Catholic clergy who work with candles as part of a worship service sometimes experience health problems from too much lead exposure. Look for candles that have thread wicks that are non-toxic for burning. Of course, it won't matter if your candles are for decorating only without being lit.
2. Never leave burning candles unattended. Make sure an adult is in the room at all times to monitor a candle's flame. A breeze from an open window, an accidental brush of a pet's tail, or other unexpected occurrences may let the flame catch nearby surfaces and cause a fire. Even sputtering wax can pop, and although rare, burn a hole in a tabletop cover or the flooring.
3. Keep candles out of the reach of pets and children. Obviously, lit candles pose a danger to grasping fingers of toddlers. Even unlit candles, however, may tempt older children to find matches or a lighter and burn the candles for their own use. If the candles are used as decorator pieces, make sure the kids know never to light them.
4. Don't burn too many at one time. Although romantic images of candle-laced bedrooms or candle-adorned bathtubs may encourage our use of dozens of lovely candles on a single occasion, this can be dangerous, since one person may not be able to watch all at once prevent sputtering or spreading if one should pop.
5. Make sure to extinguish each candle carefully. Get a bell-shaped extinguisher with a long handle to perform this function, which reduces the amount of residual smoke that can linger after blowing them out. Check the wick to be sure no glowing spots remain. If the candle comes with a cover, you may want to replace it as an extra security measure.

Place scented candles in the bathroom to eliminate odors, or try romantic designs in the bedroom. Functional candles should be kept on hand in case of electrical outages. These useful products continue to play a significant role in everyday life, so use yours with caution and enjoy them to the max.

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About the Author

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