

# Home Candle Fires

Based on data from the U.S. Fire Administration's (USFA's) National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) and the National Fire Protection Association's (NFPA's) annual fire department experience survey, NFPA estimates that:

- Candles were the heat source in an estimated average of 10,630 reported home fires annually during 2007-2011.
- These fires caused an average of 115 civilian deaths, 903 civilian injuries and \$418 million in direct property damage per year.
- More than one-third (36%) of home candle fires started in the bedroom.
- More than half (56%) of the fires occurred because the candle was too close to something that could burn.
- Candles used for light in the absence of electrical power appear to pose a particular risk of fatal fire.
- Twelve percent of the home candle fires occurred in December, 1.5 times the monthly average of 8%.
- December candle fires often involve combustible seasonal decorations that would not have been present at other times of the year.
- From January to November, decorations were first ignited in only 4% of the home candle fires. This jumped to 11% in December. In other words, the heightened candle fire risk around the winter holidays reflects a combination of increased candle use and more things that can burn in the area around the candles.
- The top three days for home candle fires were Christmas, New Year's Day, and Christmas Eve.
- Home candle fires climbed through the 1990s but have fallen since the 2001 peak.
- A number of standards relating to candle fire safety have been developed.

## Home Candle Safety Tips

- Keep candles at least 12 inches from anything that can burn.
- Never leave a burning candle unattended - blow out candles when you leave a room.
- Never leave a child unattended in a room with a candle. A child should not sleep in a room with a lit candle.
- Make sure candles are placed on a stable piece of furniture in sturdy holders that won't tip over. Place candles away from spots where they could be knocked over by children or pets.
- Candles should fit in the holders securely and holders should be made from material that can't burn.
- Extinguish all candles before going to sleep.