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Professionally and Compassionately Helping People

Candle Safety

When you go out, blow it out

Kent, Wash. - January 16, 2015- Each year, fire departments across this country respond to over 10,000 home fires caused by candles. That equates to over 27 candle fires each day.

Those fires cause an annual average of 115 civilian deaths, 900 fire injuries, and over \$400 million in direct property damage.

Last weekend the Kent Fire Department Regional Fire Authority fought a house fire in the 24900 block of Military Road South that was caused by an unattended candle. The fire destroyed the home and displaced two people, sending one to the hospital.

Not surprisingly, most candle fires occur during the winter months when candles are used as decorations, during power outages, and for religious purposes. The three days where candle fires are most likely to take place are Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, and New Year's Day.

What causes candles to lead to home fires? In more than half (56%) of home candle fires, some form of combustible material was too close to the candle. 18% of fires were attributed to abandoned or unattended candles and four percent were started by people, typically children, playing with the candle. Two percent of fires were caused by the candle being knocked over.

It should be noted that falling asleep was a factor in 11% of home candle fires and resulted in 37% of the associated deaths. 36% of candle fires started in bedrooms.

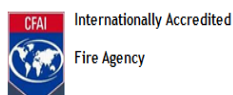
What can be done to reduce candle related fires in homes? Follow these simple steps:

- Place candles in sturdy, non-tipping bases
- Keep children and pets away from candles
- Keep combustibles, such as curtains and bedding, at least three feet away from candles
- When you leave the room, blow out the candles
- Use a flashlight in place of a candle for illumination during power outages
- Never sleep with a candle burning in the room
- Consider using artificial, electric "candles"

Be safe this winter and remember that *when you go out, blow it out*.

*Data from National Fire Protection Association 2007-2011

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