

SAFETY SENSE



Shining Some Light On Candle Safety

(NAPSI)-It's always a bright idea to learn how to use candles safely--especially if you use them to brighten your home.

According to John C. Dean, president of the National Association of State Fire Marshals (NASFM), using candles can be dangerous if you don't know the safest way to use them. Did you know that:

- in less than a second, a child or pet can knock over a candle.
- in less than 10 seconds, a candle can ignite the upholstered chair or sofa in most living rooms.
- in less than three minutes, a burning chair or sofa can release enough heat and toxic gases to seriously injure or kill a houseful of people and pets.
- in less than five minutes, the fire from a burning chair or sofa can destroy an entire home.

"Our best trained and equipped fire departments can't outrace these fires," Dean said. NASFM urges consumers to follow these safety tips:

1. Place candles on a stable, heat-resistant surface, away from children and pets. Use holders specifically designed for use with candles, preferably with high sides that help protect the flame from drafts.

2. Never leave burning candles unattended. Completely extinguish all candles when leaving a room or before going to sleep.

3. Install and maintain smoke alarms and residential fire sprinklers. Even a few seconds' warning can save lives, and your chances of surviving a fire will increase.

4. Keep candles away from highly flammable items such as upholstered furniture, Christmas trees and other products containing highly flammable plastics, such as TV sets, computers and other electronics.

5. In case of a fire, get out and stay out. Don't try to put the fire out yourself. Call for help from a neighbor's.

For more information on how to stay safe, contact your fire department or the NASFM Web site at

<http://firemarshals.org/organization/committees/resources.asp>.