

A single candle was left burning in a church after a Christmas Day service. The candle toppled onto a flower display setting alight a plastic angel and nearby paneling. The church was closed for over 10 weeks while black resinous deposit was cleaned from every surface and the organ dismantled and overhauled.

Helping you **identify**  
and **manage risk**

# Candle Safety



**Unfortunately, candle fires have become far more common. Damages from these fires — in terms of personal injury and property damage — can be devastating. While candles are a traditional and important part of worship services and holiday celebrations, they can present a significant risk.**

It is important to remember that candles themselves do not cause fires— improper use does. That’s why establishing risk control procedures and taking preventative measures is critical. The following is a sample of best practices that should be implemented when using wax candles during church services.

Use good quality candles. Inexpensive candles burn down too quickly leaving the flame dangerously close to nearby combustibles like ornaments, draperies, and tablecloths.

Collect extinguished candles immediately after a service or celebration. Place candles in a metal container with a lid and store outside the building (e.g. in a tool shed).

Trim the wicks of short candles to avoid large flames, and dispose of any candle shorter than 2 inches in height. Place candles at least 3” apart.

→ While it is always preferable not to leave burning candles unattended, it is not always possible. If candles are left burning while the building is

unattended, they must be positioned within a metal/non-combustible container filled with sand; the container must be positioned away from ornaments, linens, draperies, carpets, books, flammable decorations, and other combustible materials.

- Keep candles safely away from electrical equipment, windows, vents, air ducts and sources of drafts.
- If using hand-held candles, it's best to use purpose-made candles with drip trays. These trays help prevent ignition of nearby items, as well as damage to skin and clothing from dripping wax.
- Avoid processions that involve lit wax candles. Consider electric candles instead.
- Keep candles, matches and lighters out of the reach of children, ideally in a secure metal container hidden from view.
- Never place candles on Christmas trees.
- Make sure that your premises have adequate working fire extinguishers, as well as such life safety equipment as fire blankets. These blankets can help extinguish burning clothing and hair during the "Stop, Drop, and Roll" maneuver.
- Make sure that there are adequate and easily accessible means of escape. Unlock all doors before a service and ensure that they are easy to open.
- Designate individuals who would be responsible for calling the fire department and who would be trained in the proper usage of fire extinguishers.
- In the event of a power outage, it's best not to use candles as a light source. Flashlights or other battery-operated lights are a far safer alternative.

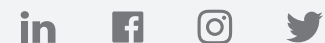
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