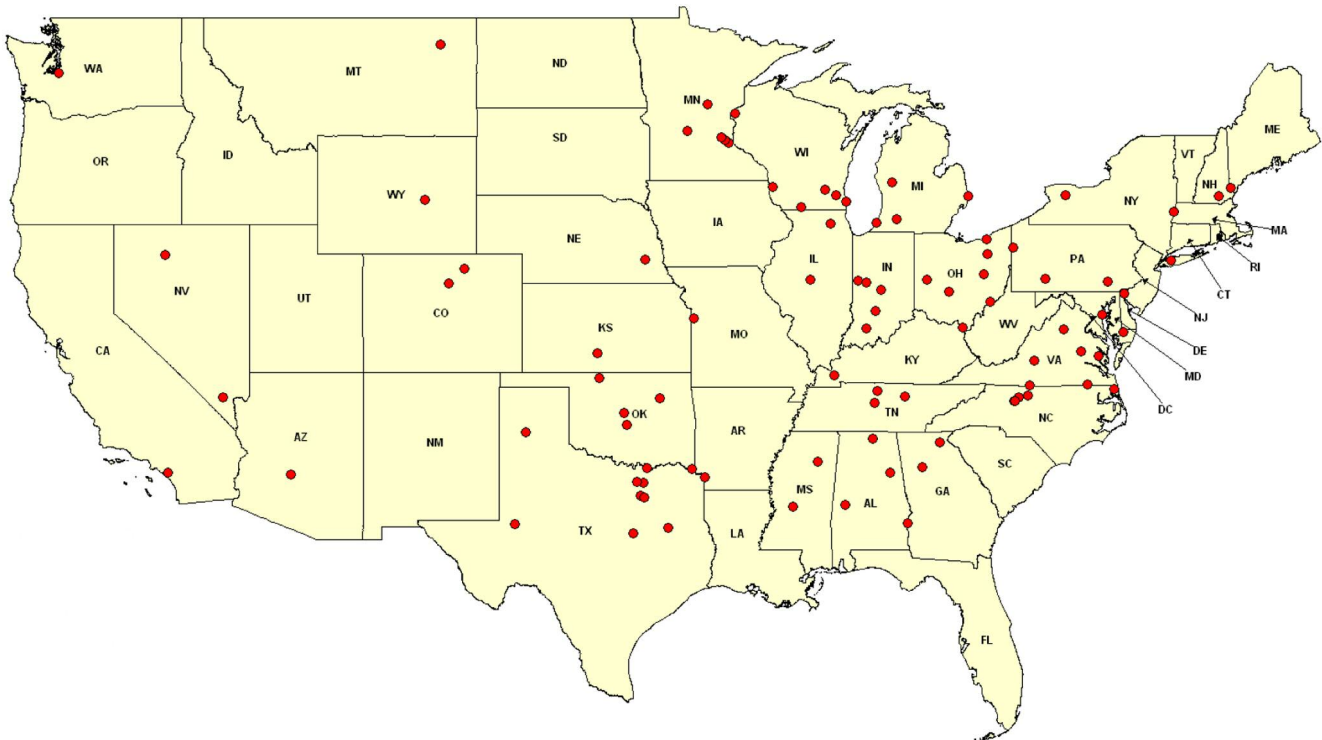


risk alert



Listening. Learning. Leading.®

Candle Fires 2004-2008



Candle fires are becoming all too common

The tranquil setting of a flickering candle can quickly become a towering inferno without the proper safety precautions.

Each year, about 17 worship centers insured by Church Mutual experience serious fires that cause damage ranging from a few thousand dollars to destruction costing millions of dollars—all as a result of misuse of candles. The average damage from a candle-related fire at a house of worship is \$176,000. The majority of candle fires start in an unoccupied room and are not detected until the fire has spread.

Loss history

2004 – 22 fires (\$1,563,165)
2005 – 13 fires (\$4,657,340)
2006 – 23 fires (\$1,079,650)
2007 – 19 fires (\$8,232,021)
2008 – 8 fires (\$136,809)

(Over)

Upon investigation, three main causes of candle fires quickly jump to the forefront:

1. Candles left unattended
2. Candles too close to flammable materials
3. Candles tipping over

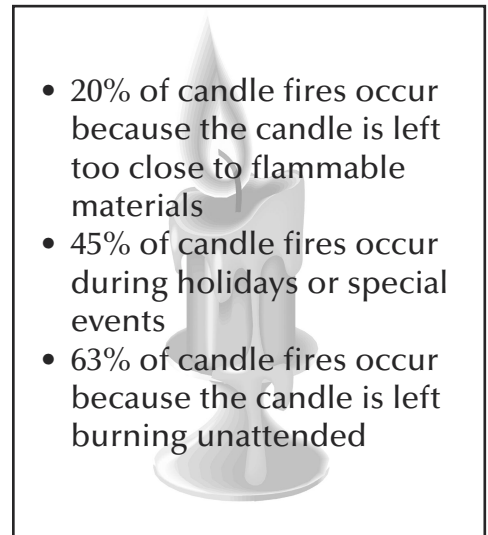
Only use candles when tradition demands it

The best advice to follow is only use candles in your services when tradition prohibits any substitute. Otherwise, use safe candle-type light bulbs or flameless wax sensor candles. You simply wave your hand over them and the motion-detecting sensors turn them on or off. These candles are battery-powered. Only a bit of the symbolic nature is lost, but a large measure of safety is gained.

Follow these guidelines to minimize the dangers

If you do use candles, here are some guidelines to follow to help you keep your house of worship safe:

- Keep candles away from items that can catch fire, such as clothing, books, linens, runners or curtains.
- Keep candles and all open flames away from flammable liquids.
- Use candleholders that are sturdy, won't tip over easily, are made from material that cannot burn and are large enough to collect dripping wax.
- Keep candles free of foreign materials, such as matches and wick clippings.
- Burn candles on steady, uncluttered, heat-resistant surfaces. Remember that candles can become hot enough to damage furniture.
- Never leave a candle burning in an unoccupied room.
- Never let candles burn for more than four hours at a time.
- During power outages, avoid carrying candles. Use flash-lights for emergency light.
- Let candles and holders cool sufficiently before moving.
- Extinguish candles with a snuffer, avoiding burns from hot wax.
- Always use drip containers that are made for candle use.
- Keep wicks trimmed to one-quarter inch and extinguish them when they get to within two inches of the holder. Candles should be extinguished before the last one-half inch of wax begins to melt.



For additional safety tips, visit the National Fire Protection Association's Web site at www.nfpa.org and type "candle safety" in the search box. For safe candle-type light bulbs and flameless wax sensor candles, visit www.candle-safety.org.

For complete collection of the risk alert series, visit our Web site and look in the Safety Resources section.