

# In the Glow

## LIGHT UP YOUR HOLIDAYS WITH CANDLE SAFETY.

Candles can add beauty and light to special occasions—but they can also spell danger if used improperly. In fact, the top five days for home candle fires are **Halloween, Christmas, Christmas Eve, New Year's Eve and New Year's Day**, according to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA).

As candle use has increased for holiday decorating, the incidence of fire has increased as well, says Lorraine Carli, an NFPA spokeswoman. “The holidays are hectic times around the house,” she says. “You might not be

paying as much attention.” Carli offers these safety tips:

- Never leave a burning candle unattended.
- Keep candles at least a foot from flammable items.
- Use sturdy candleholders.
- Avoid using candles in bedrooms.
- Don't splatter wax when extinguishing the flame.
- Use a flashlight, not candles, if the power goes out.
- Substitute battery-powered flameless “candles” for decoration.

# THE HEAT GOES ON

## AS HOME HEATING COSTS RISE, PEOPLE TURN TO ALTERNATIVE METHODS TO KEEP WARM. USE THEM WISELY.

The devastating effect of fires caused by space heaters and dirty fireplaces “rips you apart,” says Glenn Richards, a former firefighter and a large loss quality assurance specialist for Liberty Mutual. “Especially when you're dealing with a death or an injury,” he adds.

Richards and the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) offer these guidelines for staying cozy—and safe—when the temperature drops.

- **Get a yearly inspection.** Have heating equipment, including furnace, fireplace and coal and wood stoves, checked annually and cleaned as recommended. Schedule your appointments early in the fall to avoid the rush.

- **Use space heaters with care.** Place them on a firm, sturdy, noncombustible surface—at least three feet from flammable objects such as wallpaper, draperies and papers. Always turn off space heaters when leaving the room or going

to sleep. (As an extra precaution, buy one with an automatic shut-off feature.) One of the most common types of fires starts when someone is asleep and kicks the covers onto a space heater that's been left on, Richards says.

- **Burn only well-seasoned wood** in

a fireplace or woodstove. Use paper or kindling to start the fire—not flammable liquids. Don't use artificial logs in woodstoves. A sturdy fireplace screen prevents sparks from flying into the room, and a spark arrestor installed on top of your chimney keeps sparks

from starting a fire on your roof or outside your home. Make sure ashes have cooled thoroughly before disposing of them in a metal container a safe distance from your house.

- **Never use a stove top or oven** to heat your home. If you're chilly, put on an extra sweatshirt or sweater, Richards says. “Don't compromise your safety.”

### FILTER FACTS

Check your furnace filter monthly, and if it looks dirty, change it—don't go more than three months with the same filter. Your heating system has to work harder with a dirty filter, which wastes energy. Dust and dirt can also build up in your system, leading to expensive repairs or premature system failure.

**Enjoy a safe and happy holiday season!**

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