



## Home fire safety fact sheet

### Candles

**Remember:** A candle is an open flame. It can easily ignite any combustible items nearby.

Candles, lamps or similar account for over 40 preventable fire deaths in Australian homes each year\*.

The South Australian Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS) offers the following tips for the safe use of candles:

- Candles should only ever be used by adults.
- Make sure candles are placed in sturdy holders that will not tip over and place on a secure piece of heat-resistant furniture. Candle holders must be made of material that cannot burn.
- Extinguish all candles when leaving a room or going to sleep.
- Keep the immediate area around a candle clear of all items. They should be kept well away from items that can catch fire, such as clothing, books, paper, curtains, Christmas trees and flammable decorations etc.
- Do not place lit candles in windows, where blinds or curtains may come into contact with the flame.
- Any air movement (draughts) past a candle can cause the candle wax to melt unevenly. The candle may then become unstable and fall over.
- Keep candles and all open flames away from flammable liquids and items such as medical oxygen or jerry cans containing fuel.
- Do not use candles in places where they can be knocked over by children or pets.
- Battery operated candles are a good and safe alternative to traditional candles.

#### Where Young Children are Present:

- Keep candles up high, out of reach of children.
- Never leave a child unattended in a room with a lit candle. A child should not sleep in a room with a lit candle.
- Keep all matches and lighters up high, out of the sight and reach of children, and preferably in a locked cabinet.

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## During Power Outages:

- Torches, flashlights and other lights powered by batteries are much safer light sources than candles.
- Wind up torches are a good alternative, as they do not need batteries.
- Try to avoid carrying a lit candle.
- Do not use a candle to go into confined spaces like a walk-in robe.
- Never use a candle for light when fuelling equipment, such as a kerosene heater or lantern as the flame may ignite the fumes.

## Incense Sticks:

- Use sturdy heat resistant incense stick trays to ensure that falling ash does not come into contact with combustible items.
- Keep burning incense sticks out of draughts and away from curtains and blinds.
- Do not leave incense sticks burning when you are asleep or out of the house.
- Keep burning incense sticks away from children and pets.
- Keep matches and lighters out of reach and out of sight of children.

Combine the above safety tips with the installation of well-maintained, photo-electric [smoke alarms](#) in your home that are less than 10 years old. Consider having all your smoke alarms interconnected.

\* Preventable Residential Fire Fatalities: July 2003 to June 2017.