



RISK CONTROL MEMORANDUM

To:	Catholic Diocese of Green Bay Parishes, Schools & Other Facilities
Attn:	Business Managers
Date:	July 20, 2011
From:	Gwendolyn Arps ☐ Risk Control Consultant Direct Line: 920-431-6265 e-mail: gwendolyn.arps@aon.com
Re:	Fire Prevention - Candle Safety

Each year, Church properties experience serious fires resulting from the misuse of candles. The damage caused from these fires ranges anywhere from a few thousand dollars to total destruction costing millions of dollars. Since candles are an important symbol of the Church and are readily used in Church properties, the following guidelines must be followed to reduce the chance of fire in your facility.

1. If votive candle stands are used, noncombustible material such as tile, stone, marble, or granite should be in place beneath the candle lighting/burning area. If candle stands are positioned over carpet, need to provide a fire resistant mat or Plexiglas sheet under the stands to reduce fire as well as protect the surface underneath from damage due to dropped matches or spilled wax.
2. Do not allow candles to be brought into church from parishioners or visitors. Only allow parish candles purchased by a reputable candle manufacturer to be displayed and lit. Many of the candles purchased at discount stores are improperly made and have been the source of fires.
3. Keep candles away from combustible items such as linens, runners, or curtains. Even flowers placed too close to a flame can ignite when they become dry.
4. Keep candles and all open flames away from flammable liquids.
5. Candles should be placed in double-insulated containers or secured by a sturdy noncombustible base/holder.
6. Care must be taken in the placement of candles in relation to seating, foot traffic areas, and exits.
7. Keep candles free of foreign objects such as matches and wick clippings.
8. Ensure matches, lighting sticks and lighters are safely out of the reach of children.
9. Provide a noncombustible container filled with sand to extinguish and place matches or lighting sticks.



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10. Discourage the use of candles in schools and all offices. The only exception should be for religious/prayer purposes in a classroom, but the candle must be extinguished immediately when concluded.
11. 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 half-inch of wax begins to melt.
12. Extinguish candles with a snuffer, avoiding burns from hot wax.
13. Let candles and holders cool sufficiently prior to moving.
14. Never leave a candle burning in an unoccupied room. The only exceptions would be for votive candles or the sanctuary lamp candle. These candles are specifically manufactured to burn until they self-extinguish.
15. Never let candles burn for more than four hours at a time. The same exceptions as above would apply.
16. The flame of a candle should not be closer than three inches to other candle flames.
17. No lit candles on live or artificial holiday greenery. Exception: Any artificial wreath (i.e. advent wreath must be fire retardant treated and candles set in protective container).
18. Ensure a 5 pound ABC dry chemical fire extinguisher is wall mounted near the location of candles.

Content from Catholic Mutual Group

This and other Risk Control Memorandums are also available on the Diocese website at:

<http://www.gbdioc.org/facilities-a-properties/risk-management-insurance/risk-control-information-education/risk-control-memos.html>