

## **Flame or No Flame; That is the Question**

*Kris Skow*

*Spring Lake Park-Blaine-Mounds View Fire Department*

We have all heard the dangers of candle use. In 2004, an estimated 17,200 home fires started by the use of a candle. These fires resulted in an estimated 200 deaths and 1,540 injuries and the estimated direct property loss of \$200 million.

Candles used incorrectly can be very dangerous. Candles are being used for ambiance, aroma/scents, décor, etc. The candle industry has grown drastically. With the endless possibilities of candles from different shapes, and sizes to color and scents, have you heard of the newest possibility, flameless candles? You ask how a candle can be flameless. Good question, it's simple, they run on batteries. Every Fire Educator dreams a candle without a flame.

The benefits to a flameless candle:

- They can be left unattended.
- They flicker like a real candle.
- They are made of real wax.
- They have ambiance.
- Best of all, they are safe.

Flameless candles also come in different shapes, sizes, color and even scents just like a flame candle. Whether you choose to light a wick or flip a switch here are some candle safety tips.

- Extinguish all candles when leaving a room or going to sleep.
- Keep candles at least three feet away from things that can catch fire, like clothing, books and curtains.

- Use candle holders 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 and all open flames away from flammable liquids.
- Keep candle wicks trimmed to one-quarter inch and extinguish taper and pillar candles when they get to within two inches of the holder. Votives and containers should be extinguished before the last half-inch of wax starts to melt.
- During power outages, avoid carrying a lit candle. Use flashlights.
- Do not use candles in the bedroom and sleeping areas.

Need more information? <http://www.cfsi.org/candles/>