

Flameless Candles May Significantly Reduce Fire Risk

Candlelight is part of many church activities, from worship services to weddings to prayer vigils. While candles can set a peaceful mood, an open flame can quickly get out of control, even with careful handling.

Statistics Tell the Story

Candles pose special risks for churches. On average, 1,600 church fires are reported each year in the United States, causing \$105 million in property damage. Of those, 70 fires were caused by an open flame. Nearly half of the churches involved had no smoke alarms and 88 percent did not have sprinkler systems.*

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) says December is a peak month for church fires. Increased use of seasonal decorations and candles raises the risk of candle fires at Christmas time. Wreaths, wooden crèches, straw, draped fabric — anything near a candle — can burst into flames almost instantly.

Small children holding lighted candles during services are at heightened risk for igniting clothing or hair. Candles also pose special risks for other religious ceremonies, such as weddings, where brides with heavy dresses can brush against candle holders.

Flameless Candles Provide Ambiance, Reduce Fire Risks

A good first step toward preventing fire damage is being cautious with candles. Even better, consider replacing traditional wax candles with flameless LED candles. The NFPA notes that “the risk of candle fires can be reduced by using battery-operated flameless candles.” They provide candle-like ambience while significantly reducing your ministry’s risk of fire. Advantages include:

- No fire risk from an open flame.
- No hot, melting or dripping wax.
- Cost-effective LED models can last years.
- Battery-powered models are widely available.

- Flameless candles come equipped with an on/off switch; some models have timers and remotes.

Flameless candles are not only safer than traditional wax candles, but they are also available in a variety of sizes and styles that can fit any ministry's needs. Most flameless candles mimic traditional candles with a realistic 'flicker' and come in different colors, textures, designs and scents.

While your congregation may not even notice the replacement, those who do will likely appreciate your efforts toward creating a safer ministry environment. For more tips on candle safety, visit the [National Fire Protection Agency](#).

* *U.S. Structure Fires in Religious and Funeral Properties* by the National Fire Protection Agency Fire Analysis and Research Division.

