



Safety Alert

The Citadel, Military College of South Carolina

Date: 12 March 2019

Number : C002-2019

BURNING CANDLES IN BUILDINGS ON CAMPUS

DESCRIPTION OF ISSUE: According to the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA), the soaring popularity of candles has led to an increase in reported candle fires. The USFA currently estimates that candles are responsible for approximately 10,000 residential fires every year, along with 1,000 civilian injuries, 85 fatalities and \$120 million dollars in property loss. Notably, the bulk of fire incidents were directly related to consumer inattention to basic fire safety or to the misuse of candles. Nearly 40% of residential candle fires reported occurred because candles were unattended, abandoned or inadequately controlled and nearly 20% occurred because a combustible item was placed too closely to the candle. In addition to the residential statistics, the Fire and Life Safety Group (FLS) strongly discourages the use of candles in campus buildings and according to the International Fire Code 308.1.5 – open flames such as from candles, lanterns, kerosene heaters and gas fire heaters shall not be located near decorative materials or similar combustible materials (stacks of papers). www.candles.org, *International Fire Code (IFC) 2015 IFC*.

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS:

- (1). The top three causes of candle fires are; 19.3% candle unattended, 19.1% too close to combustibles, and 11.4% candles misused.
- (2). EHS audits has found evidence of burning candles in campus buildings.

PRELIMINARY CORRECTIVE ACTIONS:

- (1). Never burn a candle on or near combustible materials. Keep burning candles away from furniture, drapes, carpets, books, stacks of papers, flammable decorations.
- (2). Only burn candles in a well-ventilated rooms – fragrances and chemicals emitted by candles can be toxic.
- (3). Should not burn candles in campus buildings.

Prepared by: H. David Orr, Director of Environmental Health and Safety
Reviewed by: CAPT. Jeffrey Lamberson, Vice President of Facilities and Engineering