

GARDEN TORCH CANDLES

To: Manufacturers, Importers, Distributors and Retailers of Candles



The Product

Garden torch candles -- wax candles with a support stake made of bamboo or wood to insert them into the ground or a bucket of sand -- are used for outdoor lighting and decoration. Some contain citronella to repel mosquitoes.

The picture on the left is one example of the many types of garden torch candles that are available on the market.

The Issue

Late in 2005, the Ontario Office of the Fire Marshal (OFM) informed Health Canada of the **fire risk** associated with garden torch candles. The concern was recently raised again due to the increased availability and popularity of these candles in the marketplace.

Burn tests conducted by the OFM and by Health Canada on several types of garden torch candles confirmed that they present a fire risk to consumers because the candle flame may ignite the support stake that is embedded in the wax. Sometimes, burning pieces of the support stake break off and ignite nearby objects. The support stake may also crack, causing the candle to tip over and ignite the surrounding area. In one case, the flaming wick fell to the ground and continued burning even after the wax had been used up. Hot, dripping and splattering wax and very high flames have also been reported with these types of candles.

Candle fires can cause serious burn injuries and death, as well as significant property damage.

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Our mission is to help the people of Canada maintain and improve their health.

Health Canada

The Law

All those in the supply chain for making consumer products available to the public are responsible for providing safe products. Any person within this supply chain who knowingly sells or imports a product that results in property damage, injury or death may be held legally liable for not meeting their minimum duty of care under civil law.

Currently, Health Canada's Consumer Product Safety (CPS) program is working with stakeholders to develop the *Candles Regulations* under the *Hazardous Products Act* (HPA). Precautionary labelling and other safety requirements are under discussion for inclusion in the Regulations to reduce the significant and growing number of candle fires in Canada.

What You Can Do

A) Manufacturers, Importers, Distributors and Retailers

- Ensure that all candles carry precautionary labelling that is visible and legible to the consumer and conveys fire safety information appropriate to the candle.

Minimum fire safety information that is appropriate for all candles:

- **Never leave a burning candle unattended.**
- Place a burning candle away from anything that can catch on fire.
- Keep a burning candle out of the reach of children and pets.

Additional fire safety information that is appropriate for a garden torch candle:

- Burn the candle outdoors only.
- Place the candle securely in an upright position in soft earth or a bucket of sand, away from anything that can catch on fire such as grass, plants, mulch, overhanging branches, patio furniture, fences, buildings and other structures.
- Never group garden torch candles. If using more than one garden torch candle at a time, place them at least one candle length away from each other.
- Do not move the candle while it is burning.
- Avoid burning the candle in windy conditions.
- Put out the candle immediately if it begins to exhibit any unusual behaviour such as a high flame, intensified flame, crackling or "shooting flames".
- Use a garden hose or bucket of water to put out a garden torch candle, or smother the flame with a large snuffer, spoon or similar metal utensil. Then place the candle upside-down in a bucket of water.
- Stop using the candle when 50 mm (2 inches) of wax remains.

B) Manufacturers

- Do not knowingly manufacture candles with components that can ignite, other than the fuel and the wick.
 - When candles are made of additional materials that can ignite, flaming can become intensified, sometimes with devastating results. Some examples of ignitable candle components to avoid are bamboo, wood, birch bark, dried flowers, ribbon, paper and plastic.
- Test your candles regularly to ensure they burn safely throughout their useful life.
 - A test for potential hazards associated with secondary ignition sources in and on candles is one of four tests for candle fire safety available in *ASTM F 2417-04, Standard Specification for Fire Safety for Candles*, issued by ASTM International.
- Cooperate in the removal, disposal or recall of any of your candles that are found to be unsafe.

C) Importers and Distributors

- Do not knowingly import or distribute candles with components that can ignite, other than the fuel and the wick.
 - When candles are made of additional materials that can ignite, flaming can become intensified, sometimes with devastating results. Some examples of ignitable candle components to avoid are bamboo, wood, birch bark, dried flowers, ribbon, paper and plastic.
- Before importing or distributing candles, ask your suppliers to provide you with fire safety test results. If this information is not available, have the candles tested yourself or do not import or distribute the candles.
 - A test for potential hazards associated with secondary ignition sources in and on candles is one of four tests for candle fire safety available in *ASTM F 2417-04, Standard Specification for Fire Safety for Candles*, issued by ASTM International.
- Cooperate in the removal, disposal or recall of any of your candles that are found to be unsafe.

D) Retailers

- Do not knowingly sell candles with components that can ignite, other than the fuel and the wick.
 - When candles are made of additional materials that can ignite, flaming can become intensified, sometimes with devastating results. Some examples of ignitable candle components to avoid are bamboo, wood, birch bark, dried flowers, ribbon, paper and plastic.
- Before purchasing candles for sale, ask your suppliers to provide you with fire safety test results. If this information is not available, have the candles tested yourself or do not purchase the candles.
 - A test for potential hazards associated with secondary ignition sources in and on candles is one of four tests for candle fire safety available in *ASTM F 2417-04, Standard Specification for Fire Safety for Candles*, issued by ASTM International.
- When notified of a removal, disposal or recall of an unsafe candle, immediately remove all units from sale and follow any other corrective actions.

For Further Information

If you require further information, visit the Consumer Product Safety section of Health Canada's Web site at www.healthcanada.gc.ca/cps or contact your nearest Consumer Product Safety regional office (see listings that follow).

Burnaby	(604) 666-5003	Bby_Prodsafe@hc-sc.gc.ca
Calgary	(403) 292-4677	Cal_Prodsafe@hc-sc.gc.ca
Edmonton	(780) 495-2626	Edm_Prodsafe@hc-sc.gc.ca
Saskatoon	(306) 975-4502	Sk_Prodsafe@hc-sc.gc.ca
Winnipeg	(204) 983-5490	Mb_Prodsafe@hc-sc.gc.ca
Hamilton	(905) 572-2845	Tor_Prodsafe@hc-sc.gc.ca
Toronto	(416) 973-4705	Tor_Prodsafe@hc-sc.gc.ca
Montréal	(514) 283-5488	Quebec_Prod@hc-sc.gc.ca
Longueuil	(450) 646-1353	Quebec_Prod@hc-sc.gc.ca
Québec	(418) 648-4327	Quebec_Prod@hc-sc.gc.ca
Moncton	(506) 851-6638	Atlantic_ProdSafe@hc-sc.gc.ca
Halifax	(902) 426-8300	Atlantic_ProdSafe@hc-sc.gc.ca
St. John's	(709) 772-4050	Atlantic_ProdSafe@hc-sc.gc.ca

We appreciate your attention to the fire safety issue associated with garden torch candles, and urge you to take appropriate steps to help ensure the safety and safe use of candles by Canadians.