

Press Release

DEKRA offers tips on candle safety at Christmas

Taking Care by Candlelight

- Advent wreaths and other fire hazards in the home
- Never leave burning candles and lights unattended
- RAL Quality Mark ensures quality and safety

Advent is a time for candles – and thus also a time for numerous house fires, DEKRA experts warn. Anyone who wants to enjoy the run-up to Christmas by candlelight should be sure to observe the safety instructions. And candle safety begins with making the right purchase.

One of the most frequent mistakes is a result of burning candles placed too close to curtains, advent wreaths, floral arrangements or decorations. Candles may be placed on a Christmas tree only if they are a sufficient distance from any branches. In addition, it is dangerous to leave burning candles unattended or with children or pets.

An additional fire hazard may arise from candles of inferior quality. If a candle burns all the way down and the wick tips over, this can result in a fire. On advent wreaths, in floral arrangements and on Christmas trees, it is safer to use candles that go out by themselves before burning down completely. The risk of fire also decreases if candle flames are extinguished with a candle snuffer instead of being blown out. This is because flames can reignite even if they have been blown out due to inferior wick quality or an air draft.

DEKRA recommends looking for the RAL Quality Mark of *Gütegemeinschaft Kerzen* (the German candle quality assurance association) when buying candles. This mark, which is only awarded following neutral testing at the DEKRA candle laboratory, guarantees safe fire behavior, quality, and freedom from harmful substances.

Tealights can also pose a particular risk: If the wick slips to the edge of the aluminum cup, the material can heat up to such an extent that a wax fire ensues. This risk is particularly common when tealight cups are almost empty or when several tealights are placed too close together, resulting in the cups overheating.

Here are DEKRA's safety tips:

- Never leave burning candles unattended or with children or pets.
- Make sure to leave a sufficient gap to any flammable materials and to use a stable, heat-resistant candle holder.

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- Do not blow out candles, but extinguish them with a candle snuffer. Caution: An air draft can reignite a glowing wick.
- Pay attention to quality when buying candles. The “RAL Quality Mark for Candles” indicates that candles are safe to use. This quality mark can be recognized thanks to the stylized candle flame symbol.
- Use self-extinguishing candles where possible.
- Have a bucket of water, fire blanket, and fire extinguisher on hand. Call the emergency services if required.

DEKRA tests candles and candle materials for burning safety and chemical safety on behalf of manufacturers and retailers at its accredited laboratory for environmental and product analysis in Stuttgart.

About DEKRA

DEKRA has been active in the field of safety for more than 90 years. Founded in 1925 in Berlin as Deutscher Kraftfahrzeug-Überwachungs-Verein e.V., it is today one of the world's leading expert organizations. DEKRA SE is a subsidiary of DEKRA e.V. and manages the Group's operating business. In 2018, DEKRA generated estimated sales totaling more than 3.3 billion euros. The company currently employs more than 45,000 people in approximately 60 countries on all six continents. With qualified and independent expert services, they work for safety on the road, at work and at home. These services range from vehicle inspection and expert appraisals to claims services, industrial and building inspections, safety consultancy, testing and certification of products and systems, as well as training courses and temporary work. The vision for the company's 100th birthday in 2025 is that DEKRA will be the global partner for a safe world.