CANDLE SAFETY TIP: Trimming the Wick

Candle manufacturers routinely recommend trimming the wick to ¼ inch before and – if needed – when it gets too long while burning.

Trimming the wick to ¼ inch each time before lighting your candle will reduce uneven burning, excess smoking and dripping. It will also help ensure you won’t have an accidental candle fire.

The wick controls how a candle burns, providing the even and efficient consumption of wax, and optimum burning performance.

Trimming the wick ensures that it won’t get too long, which can cause the flame to get too high or flare, both of which can result in smoking and uneven burning. But trimming the wick is also a critical safety precaution for preventing breakage of a glass-filled candle toward the end of its burning life or avoiding scorching beneath a self-standing candle.

If a high concentration of carbon balls forms on a too-long wick, or a large mass of curled wick drops to the bottom of a glass container, this unwanted residue can act as a second wick and catch fire. This is known as secondary ignition. In some cases, the flame from this second wick can come in contact with the glass, causing it to break and possibly catching the supporting surface on fire.

So be sure to trim the wick each time before burning and to discard any burnt wick pieces. Don’t leave them in the candle, where they could result in secondary ignition. If you notice the wick is getting too long or the flame is getting too high, blow out your candle, let it cool, trim the wick and then relight.

And last but not least…. always read the fire-safety warning label on your candle, and follow the manufacturer’s use instructions. They’re provided to make sure you have a safe and enjoyable experience when burning candles.