



**Boston Fire Department
Fire Prevention Division
1010 Massachusetts Avenue – 4th Floor
Boston, MA 02118**

**CANDLE USAGE GUIDELINES, DEFINITIONS AND
APPLICATION FOR USE OF CANDLES IN A PLACE OF ASSEMBLY PERMIT**

The Boston Fire Department prefers the use of LED lighting as opposed to an open flame whenever possible. The BFD does allow the use of votive & tea lights in restaurants, banquet halls, and similar function facilities without a permit or requiring a paid detail provided they are used in compliance with BFD regulations. Candle usage in Places of Assembly is considered a form of open burning regulated by CMR 527 and the Boston Fire Prevention Code. *Candles that do not meet the definition of votive or tea light shall require a permit for use in restaurants, banquet halls, and similar function facilities. To ensure that candles adhere to industry standards, we recommend the use of candles with cautionary fire-safety labeling and instructions applied by the manufacture.

(Examples found at http://www.candles.org/safety_label.html)

Facility requirements:

- The facility holding the Boston Fire Department Place of Assembly Permit must apply for and obtain a Boston Fire Department General Permit for the Use of Candles in a Place of Assembly.
- Facility must have an active and monitored fire alarm system.
- Fire extinguishers must be readily available, clearly marked, and located as referenced in NFPA 10
- Facility must adhere to the requirements of 527 CMR 10.13(2) pertaining to assignment and duties of a Crowd Manager and the keeping of the required safety plan check list.
- A candle permit will **not** be approved for use groups designated as night clubs, bars, and dance halls.
- A candle permit will **not** be issued for use in a tent or any temporary enclosure. (Refer to guidelines for votive& tea light use).

Candle Permit Application Requirements:

- A completed BFD application for a Candle Permit along with a fee of \$50.00
- Additional submittals with your application include:
 - Submit a clear 8x10" color photo of each different candle assembly design.
The photo must show a ruler for scale and provide the measured width of the bottom of each base.
 - A detailed written description of the entire candle assembly, including dimensions, must be provided for each design.
Each item listed in the candle assembly must be described in detail with dimensions provided. (*Example: Candle assembly #1 consists of a 4-inch tall by 5-inch diameter fishbowl shaped clear glass votive filled with a 2-inch tall by 2-inch wide brown square votive housing a 1-inch tall by 1-inch (1 ounce wax candle).*)
 - Certificates of fire resistance or an application for a representative sample for any incorporated decorative material (artificial vegetation, ribbons banners etc) must be provided to the Department Chemist for approval **at least 30 days** prior to the event.
 - Provide an acceptable 8x10 seating plan indicating the location of all fire extinguishers and exits along with a narrative that explains the number and display location of each candle assembly. (Example: candle assembly #1 is used as a center piece on (15) 12 ft round dining tables in Ballroom. Assembly #2 totaling 3 shall be placed on head table at every 4th place setting).

Candle requirements:

- No liquid fueled, gel, or home-made candles / No floor standing candelabras or candle assemblies
- Candle assemblies shall not be placed in any aisle, exit access, or exit.
- After use, candles shall be extinguished and allowed to cool and shall be properly stored or discarded.
- Paper, plastic and similarly combustible table coverings are prohibited.
- Excluding the candle itself, all items must be inherently fire resistant.
- No dried flower or similar dried vegetation shall be incorporated in or near any candle assembly.
- Artificial decorative flowers and artificial decorative vegetation may be part of a candle assembly and shall be flame resistant or flame retardant and certified by the Department Chemist. Such materials shall not be directly attached to the candle or arranged so that said material can come in contact with the flame.
- Candles shall be enclosed within a non-combustible chimney approved for such use.
Shades may be used provided they are non-combustible.
- The flame tip should be a minimum of **2"**vertical from the rim of the enclosure.
- Chimneys shall be firmly attached to the base and tall enough to prevent accidental exposure to persons or accidental ignition of combustible objects coming in contact with or on placed on top of the device.
- Wicks shall be trimmed to **¼"inch or less** before use.
- Candle assemblies shall be kept a minimum of **12 inches** from other combustible materials nearby to prevent accidental contact with drapes, curtains, clothing or any other readily combustible materials.
- To prevent overturning, the assembly base or candle holder must be of a stable, weighted, or anchored design that will return to the upright position after being tilted to an angle of 45 degrees from vertical.
- Candle assemblies must be placed on approved surfaces and shall be securely seated in a sturdy, noncombustible base. Holders shall be wider than the candle, and capable of collecting all drippings.
- No more than one candle assembly per table except for longer banquet or head tables where the allowed number will be reasonably spaced based on proximity to other candles and to combustibles.
- The District Chief may disapprove or set the conditions for the use of any candles determined to be excessive or non-compliant with this regulation. This includes the addition of a Boston Fire Department Paid Fire Detail which is the Permit Holder's responsibility.

Votive & Tea lights (No Permit or Paid Detail required)

Restaurants:

- ❑ The Boston Fire Department allows the use of [wax] votive and tea light *candles on tables in restaurants during food service hours and no later than 11PM.*
- ❑ Votive are limited to one per table and secured in a stable, non-combustible enclosure located to avoid the danger of ignition of any combustible material.
- ❑ The flame tip should be a minimum of **2”vertical from the rim** of the enclosure. No part of the flame should be capable of accidentally injuring persons or igniting clothing or any other material.
- ❑ Should the votive tip over it should not have any combustibles within a **12” circle** to ignite or it shall self extinguish.
- ❑ Wicks shall be trimmed to **¼ inch or less** before lighting.
- ❑ Paper, plastic and similarly combustible table coverings are prohibited.
- ❑ Establishments that transition. from food service to primarily providing bar service and entertainment shall extinguish all votive and tea lights prior to the transition
- ❑ The BFD District Chief may set the conditions or restrict the use of votive in establishments determined to be unsafe or non-compliant with this regulation.

Banquet halls and similar function facilities:

- ❑ The Boston Fire Department allows the use of [wax] votive and tea light candles on tables in banquet halls and function facilities *where dinner is provided and seating is designated based on invitation or number of tickets sold.*
- ❑ Votive are limited to one per table and secured in a stable, non-combustible enclosure located to avoid the danger of ignition of any combustible material.
- ❑ The flame tip should be a minimum of **2”vertical from the rim** of the enclosure. No part of the flame should be capable of accidentally injuring persons or igniting clothing or any other material.
- ❑ Should the votive tip over it should not have any combustibles within a **12” circle** to ignite or it shall self extinguish
- ❑ Wicks shall be trimmed to **¼ inch or less** before lighting.
- ❑ Paper, plastic and similarly combustible table coverings are prohibited
- ❑ In facilities servicing weddings and similar events that transition primarily to entertainment and bar service following dinner, facility staff shall extinguish all votive within a reasonable period after food service has been completed.
- ❑ The BFD District Chief may set the conditions or restrict the use of votive in establishments determined to be unsafe or non-compliant with this regulation.

Votive Use in Tents:

Votive may be allowed in tents provided the tent has been permitted for use by the BFD, and all applicable precautions noted for votive in banquet halls are adhered to. The District Chief upon review of the application may require a paid detail or set conditions deemed suitable for the hazard.

Candles types: (As defined by the BFD)

VOTIVE: (As defined by the BFD) A small cylindrical wax candle, usually about 1½ inches in diameter and 2 or 2½ inches high, designed to be placed in a "cup" or votive holder to hold the liquefied wax that results from burning. The holder is approved and intended for such use and has a rim at least 2 inches above the highest point of the flame within.

TEA LIGHT: (As defined by the BFD) a small, cylindrical, filled wax candle -- usually about 1 inch in diameter and 1½ inches high -- often poured into a metal holder. Tea lights shall also be situated within an approved holder intended for such use with a rim at least 2” above the highest point of the flame within.

TAPER: A slender candle – typically 6 to 18 inches high and sometimes called a dinner candle – designed to be held securely upright by a candle holder.

PILLAR: A free-standing candle, usually having a diameter of 3 inches or more. Despite the name, pillars or column candles can be round, square, hexagonal, etc. Although they stand on their own, they must be burned on a heat-resistant candleholder.

CONTAINER, JAR OR FILLED CANDLE CONTAINER, A candle that is poured when manufactured into a glass, metal or ceramic container specifically designed to hold the wax and withstand the heat of the burning candle...

SPECIALTY CANDLE: An unusually shaped or sculpted free-standing candle, often depicting a three-dimensional object or designed to be viewed primarily as decorative artwork, and sometimes called a novelty candle.

CANDLE ASSEMBLY: (As defined by the BFD) Candle assemblies are comprised of a stable, non-combustible base. An attached noncombustible candle enclosure approved for such use, the candle (standard wax), and any other items included in these arrangements (plant or floral arrangements, ribbons, statues, rocks, etc.). Flames are enclosed within the non combustible enclosure.