OFFICE OF FIRE SAFETY

Candle Use Guidelines – Morningside Campus

The use of candles in campus buildings, with exception of the items listed below, is strictly prohibited.

In instances where candles are permitted, the following requirements must be complied with:

Use of Candles for Religious Ceremonies, Within the University Housing Environ:

The use of candles, incense or similar items with open flames is prohibited in residence buildings. However, some exceptions are made for students celebrating religious festivals in which candles play a significant role, for example, the Jewish Festival of Lights.

To obtain permission for candle use for special occasions, students must submit a written statement from their religious or spiritual leader, identifying the religious celebration and the nature of the use of candles. Requests must be submitted at least 72 hours in advance of the requested date to the Office of the Assistant Dean, Residence Life. Approval will be granted for (a) specific date(s) and location only, and copies of the approval will be submitted to Housing and Dining and the Office of Fire and Life Safety within Facilities Operation.

The University reserves the right to deny any request for the use of candles or burning of incense. If permitted, candles must be used in compliance with the following fire safety guidelines:

Fire Safety Guidelines for the Use of Candles

- Candles may not be left unattended while burning.
- Candles must be of the low flame variety and must be placed in a properly fitting menorah or in a shallow glass container.
- Candles must be placed on a noncombustible surface.
- Candles must be placed in a shallow dish of water on a hard flat surface if the surface is not noncombustible.
- All readily combustible materials, such as drapes, must be secured away from the open flame.
- Candles shall be doused with water prior to disposal.
- Incense may only be used in conjunction with a burning utensil approved in advance by the Office of Fire and Life Safety.

Use of Candles for Religious Ceremonies, Within Academic and Administrative Buildings:

To obtain permission for candle use for religious ceremonies within academic and administrative buildings, requestors must submit a written statement from their religious or spiritual leader, identifying the religious celebration and the nature of the use of candles. Requests must be
submitted at least 72 hours in advance of the requested date to the Office of Fire and Life Safety within Facilities Operations.

The University reserves the right to deny any request for the use of candles or burning of incense. If permitted, candles must be used in compliance with the following fire safety guidelines:

**Use of Candles in Public Space, Within Academic and Administrative Buildings:**

- Candles for decorative lighting purpose are permitted within public space, (i.e. Public Assembly Space, meeting rooms, etc.) only. Candles are not permitted within any private office space, sleeping areas, or other non-public space.
- Where a Public Assembly Permits has been issued, the space must also have a current Open Flame Permit, issued by the New York City Fire Department.
- Only approved outside food vendors shall be allowed to utilize candles for decorative lighting purpose, providing they comply with the Candle Policy of Columbia University. Vendors shall be provided a copy of this policy and upon request shall provide written certification that their employees are properly trained in the lighting and handling of candles or decorative open flame lighting as well as the knowledge of how to operate a fire extinguisher.
- Candles use shall be attended at all times by a member of the catering staff who has been trained in Sterno use and fire safety.
- A 10 pound BC dry chemical extinguisher, or Type K extinguisher, shall be available within ten (10) feet of the serving table or tables.
- Cardboard, paper, or flammable candleholders are prohibited.
- Candleholders must be of a design that holds the candle in a vertical position and prevents tipping, and located so as to avoid ignition of combustible materials.
- When placed on a table less than four (4) feet wide in any direction, candles must be protected by noncombustible globes or shades, with a maximum height of twenty-two inches for tables over four feet wide, and sixteen inches for tables under four wide.
- Kerosene or combustible mixture liquid fuel lamps for decorative lighting purpose are not permitted in University buildings.
- Only regular cloth table covers shall be used. All table decorations must be flame resistant. Combustible material such as plates, napkins, plastic utensils, cups and similar products shall be separated by a minimum of three feet from candles.
- In the event of a fire, Columbia University Fire Safety Policy shall be followed. Public Safety shall be immediately notified.

**Use of Candles Within the Chapel:**

- Candles may not be left unattended while burning.
- Candles for ceremonial lighting purpose are permitted on the Altar, or immediately in front of the Altar.
- A fire extinguisher shall be available within ten (10) feet of the altar.
• Candles are not permitted in the Knave, Postcrypt, any carpeted areas, or private offices within the building.
• Candles where permitted, shall be attended at all times by a staff member or their representative.
• Cardboard, paper, or flammable candleholders are prohibited.
• Candleholders must be of a design that holds the candle in a vertical position and prevents tipping, and located so as to avoid ignition of combustible materials.
• When placed on a table less than four (4) feet wide in any direction, candles must be protected by noncombustible globes or shades, with a maximum height of twenty-two inches for tables over four feet wide, and sixteen inches for tables under four wide.
• Kerosene or combustible mixture liquid fuel lamps for decorative lighting purpose are not permitted in University buildings.
• Only regular cloth table covers shall be used. All table decorations must be flame resistant. Combustible material shall be separated by a minimum of three feet from candles.
• In the event of a fire, Columbia University Fire Safety Policy shall be followed. Public Safety shall be immediately notified.

For further information on Candle Use, please contact the Office of Fire Safety at firesafety@columbia.edu