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Communal Candle Lighting Safety



FOR SHABBOS & YOMIM TOVIM

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by Frank Storch

In loving memory of Sarala Ginzberg, ה"ע, and Robin Niman, ה"ע.



SETUP

- Ideally, candle lighting should take place in one area of the hotel/event facility. The rooms selected for candle lighting should be large, well-ventilated, and not main rooms where children play. Designate areas to park strollers and walkers, away from where the candles are being lit.
- Ensure all emergency exit doors remain easily accessible at all times and not blocked by any obstructions (e.g., tables, chairs).
- Ensure all the candle lighting rooms have working, easily accessible, non-expired fire extinguishers.
- Place additional fire extinguishers immediately near the candle lighting stations in each room. Additionally, place fire blankets in visible and easily accessible locations.
- Do not set up candles at guests' personal tables.
- Set up several candle lighting stations in each room to prevent overcrowding and to ensure guests light on time.
- Set up one easily accessible candle lighting area for elderly and/or wheelchair bound guests.
- Ensure that candle lighting stations are not set up too close to a smoke alarm, heat sensor, or sprinkler system.
- Ideally, use tables covered with nonflammable surfaces for the candle lighting stations (e.g., tin foil, stone, marble). If you must use tablecloths, take extra precaution, since they are highly flammable and easily become tripping hazards.
- To prevent candles from being extinguished by drafts, set up candle lighting stations away from doorways, vents, and fans. Keep the tea lights a minimum of 12 inches away from anything that can catch fire (e.g., draperies, flowers, coats).
- Use tea lights instead of candles since they are small, can be lit easily, and are less of a fire/burn hazard.
- Do not place tea lights under or touching any flammable surface (e.g., shelves, walls).
- Ideally, place tea lights on aluminum trays. If decorative candle/tea light holders or mirror trays are used on the candle lighting stations, take extra precaution.
- Do not place more than 48 tea lights (8 long by 6 wide) on a 26" x 18" sheet pan. Don't place the pans too close to the edge of the table.
- Keep tea lights two inches apart to prevent the wicks from igniting a larger fire. To avoid burns, set up tea light wicks to stand straight up.
- Use only long barbecue-style matches stored in several metal trays or containers on each table. Try to avoid distributing short matches or matchbooks.
- Set up several metal trays with sand or trays covered in nonflammable material (e.g., stone, metal) for guests to place their matches.
- Set up several tapered candles and/or yahrtzeit candles to be used solely for lighting matches.
- When setting up the candles to be used solely to light the tea lights or setting up the candles in a decorative manner, always use candle holders that are specifically designed for candle use. They should be heat resistant, large enough to contain melted wax, stable if placed on a table, and should fit the candle inside securely.
- Store a large number of extra tea lights, matches, and yahrtzeit candles in a safe place near the candle lighting stations.
- Prepare the tea lights and yahrtzeit candles on trays and store them so they can be available for immediate use. This set up is helpful especially for Shabbos when candles may not be lit after the specific candle lighting time.
- Only use yahrtzeit candles encased in glass or metal holders and place them on aluminum trays. Do not use yahrtzeit candles encased in plastic. Ensure there



- is sufficient space between each yahrtzeit candle.
- Provide a sufficient number of prayer books and/or laminated cards with the appropriate blessings near, but not on, the candle lighting stations.
- Put labels on prayer books and/or laminated cards instructing guests not to place them on the candle lighting tables.



STAFF

- To ensure maximum fire prevention techniques are implemented, train all staff appropriately.
- Ensure a key staff member checks the correct candle lighting times by calling the Zmanim hotline: 718-331-8463.
- Designate a minimum of one non-Jewish staff member for each candle lighting area, whose sole responsibility is supervising the candle lighting process.
- *Train staff members to:*
 - » be aware of the correct candle lighting set up procedures.
 - » avoid wearing jackets, ties, or long flowing sleeves when supervising the candle lighting
 - » remain very alert when supervising the candle lighting areas and not be distracted. They should not use cell phones unless there is a fire or other emergency.
 - » be proactive if flames start to merge.
 - » use a fire extinguisher correctly, i.e., pulling the pin on the handle.
 - » stand near the candle lighting areas as guests enter the room, provide them each with matches, inform them where the prayer books/ laminated cards are located, and direct them to lighting stations that are not yet filled to capacity.
 - » remind guests to be mindful of their hair, sleeves, and scarves when lighting.
- » stay alert to whether lighting stations are becoming too crowded, and if so, to set up additional stations.
- » ensure guests do not place prayer books and/ or laminated cards on the tables.
- » instruct guests to not pass lit matches from person to person at any time.
- » ensure matches are extinguished completely after guests light.
- » periodically throw used matches into a fireproof container to prevent matches from reigniting.
- » ensure guests do not attempt to move their tea lights or yahrtzeit candles to their personal tables for meals or for use at the end of Shabbos during Havdalah.
- » rope off the candle lighting area, after candle lighting is over, to prevent children from coming near the candles.
- » monitor all candles and tea lights until they are no longer burning.
- » never extinguish candles unless there is a fire.
- » later in the evening, to avoid a potential fire, consider safely transporting lit yahrtzeit candles to a safe area (e.g., stainless steel kitchen counter). Candles should then be monitored periodically throughout the night and until they are no longer burning.



- » ensure all matches are removed from the candle lighting stations on Shabbos once all the candles are lit. On holidays, leave a small amount of matches for guests who may be lighting later.

- » be aware of the fire alarm locations and the hotel's fire evacuation plan and routes.
- » know who to call first and their phone numbers if there is a fire.



SIGNAGE

• *Post the following signage in large print, legible for all guests at all candle lighting areas:*

- » basic fire safety rules and responses.
- » "Due to fire regulations, guests are prohibited from lighting candles in their rooms. If you violate this regulation, you are risking your life, your family's lives and other guests' lives." (Also include this text in the guest brochure.)
- » correct candle lighting times and all necessary blessings.
- » "Place Used Matches in the Trays Provided."
- » "Prayer Books/Laminated Cards Available Here" near prayer books/laminated cards.
- » "Fire Alarm" near fire alarms (if not already posted).

- » "Fire Extinguisher" near fire extinguishers (if not already posted).
- » showing the evacuation routes of the hotel.

• *Post a sign advising guests to:*

- » be mindful of their hair, sleeves, and scarves.
- » light the tea lights at the back of the table first.
- » not reach across or near lit candles.
- » not pass a lit match from person to person.
- » not to light a tea light from another tea light.
- » not move a burning candle.
- » supervise and caution their children to stay away from the candle lighting stations.

Please share your feedback regarding this guide to improve future editions.

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ONE LIGHT
In Memory of Rebbetzin
Batsheva Kanievsky ז"ל

**LIGHTING UP
THE WORLD
together**

Each week we light Shabbos candles as one, pray for one another, and give tzedakah together.

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COMMUNAL CANDLE LIGHTING SAFETY: For Shabbos & Yomim Tovim

