

Why Trust Anyone Else?

Candle Damage to Wall Paint

Candles improve your home's ambiance by emitting pleasing scents and providing warm candlelight. Sometimes candles do more harm than good. Not only does burning candles increase your risk of a house fire, but your candles can also create other hassles inside the home, especially to painted walls.

Black Soot Deposits from Candles

- Petroleum-based candles, such as gel or paraffin wax types, produce soot as they burn. Some candles, due to an excessively long wick, imprecise wax mixture, high levels of perfumed oils or other problems, give off significantly larger amounts of soot than other candles. The black soot particles stick to every open surface in the room, but the soot is probably most apparent in large scorched-looking deposits near where you burn your candles. Remove these soot stains with a melamine foam cleaning sponge. These dry cleaning sponges allow you to rub material away from your painted walls without removing paint or damaging the drywall.

Extreme Soot Damage to Painted Walls: **Ghosting**

- Ghosting, which is also associated with cigarette smoke and improperly vented fireplaces, can occur when you regularly burn excessively soot-emitting candles. Over time, light grey-black outlines appear on your walls. These lines show up along areas where the circulating soot can easily settle, such as around picture frames or just above baseboards. Soot ghosting can occur along your wall studs, creating a clear outline of the room's frame. Cleaning an entire room of ghosted walls is probably not a practical solution to extreme soot residue problems and may not result in a consistent finished appearance. Your only other option is to repaint the room, first using at least one coat of stain-killing primer.

How to Avoid Candle Damage to Your Walls

- To find out if your preferred candles are sootier than others, place a single candle in a small room. Surround the candle with stacks of white plastic plates, and light the candle. Monitor the lit candle for about an hour before extinguishing it. If soot from your candles is causing the damage to your painted walls, you'll see the proof on top of each stack of plates -- an obvious coat of black, smoky film. Whenever you purchase candles for your home, seek out **soy** or **beeswax** varieties, which produce far less soot than petroleum-based waxes. Minimize soot problems by trimming candle wicks to 1/4-inch before burning or by using your candles with candle warmers to melt them slowly, which releases their scent without risk of fire, smoke or drippings. Avoid wax drip and splatter damage on your walls by using dripless candles when possible, and extinguish burning wicks with a candle snuffer.

Be aware of candles that have been recalled by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. This information can be found at www.cpsc.gov. For an Air Quality Inspection, call Honest Home Inspections at 262-424-5587.