

Wax_And_Fuel_Storage_2004.txt

Wax and Fuel

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Over several summers, I discovered that wax inevitably melts in a kit in a hot trunk. The wax will then proceed to wander wherever it can 'wick' to. You want a plastic barrier between candles, Chapstick, Insect repellent, etc. and the rest of the kit.

This effect 'did in' every commercial kit I've bought and tried. All of them contained an obligatory candle for emergency lighting. All of them failed due to that. Ever try to make tea from a wax soaked tea bag? Use a wax impregnated bandage? I now pack consumables in separate plastic boxes from the basic kit. (Candles, fuel, food, etc.) Each class in it's own Rubbermaid or equivalent plastic shield.

You may not have this problem. I live in "Sunny California" and it can hit 105 F on a summer day, in the shade. A car parked at work for 8 hours in the sun gets much hotter. If you live in Nome or Buffalo New York, well, maybe you don't have to worry about this. Then again, you don't want to need your kit right after that trip to the sunbelt, and then find it wax soaked.

And WHY have a candle, anyway? It will last at most a couple of hours. It will not work in rain or wind. It is a pain to carry when lit. Etc. About the only virtues it has are that it can be stored forever, unless it melts..., and it is much cheaper than what OUGHT to be in the kit. A decent Maglight flashlight.

So, if you get a commercial kit with a candle in it, IMMEDIATELY, take the candle out and put in a Maglight of roughly equal size. You will thank me later.

Fuel has a similar problem. I've done a long duration storage test of Coleman Fuel and found a modestly secure way to store it. Use a 'Fuel Bottle' of the kind sold in camping stores for use with MSR stoves. (The Sigg bottles work well too). These are spun aluminum bottles with "O" ring sealed lids. I stored the fuel for at least 3 years with no problems. I'd suggest keeping the bottle upright, though, since I did not test it laying down.

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My present system is to store the fuel bottle inside an ice chest (sans ice) to reduce the peak temperatures experienced. Since I now drive a Diesel car, I've gone over to Kerosene as a car stored stove fuel. This has reduced the temperature sensitivity of the fuel storage system, at the expense of esthetics in cooking. Kerosene is sooty and smelly.

Propane and Butane cartridges are both rated to 120F for storage. I've had them in the trunk at higher temperatures without leakage, but it makes me nervous. If you choose them as your fuel of choice, go with the ice chest solution.

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