

Chanukah 5779 – Halachot and Frequently Asked Questions

When is the preferred time to light Chanukah candles?

1) During the Week:

It is best to light immediately after the initial appearance of the stars (“tzeit hakoachvim”). However, most Poskim are of the opinion to light the candles somewhere between 20-30 minutes after sunset (approximately 4:50 this year).

If one is using the standard ½ hour candles that it is best to light at Tzeit Hakoachvim and let the candles burn for a half hour beyond that point.

If one is lighting any time after Tzeit Hakoachavi, the candles must burn at least a half hour. One’s candles should stay lit for at least a ½ hour after Tzeit Hakoachvim which is 5:05 PM throughout Chanukah.

2) Friday Night: Before the Shabbat candles

3) Motzai Shabbat: When Shabbat ends (after 5:06 PM)

(Please Note: There are different customs with regards to the order of the Chanukah candles and Havdalah. If your family custom is to light Chanukah candles first, you must say “Ata chonatanu” or “Baruch hamavdil bein kodesh lechol” before striking the match.)

What is the latest time to light Chanukah candles?

If one cannot get home early enough to light at the preferred time, one may light later in the night. If the man of the home will not arrive home until after the family is sleeping, his wife can light on her husband’s behalf. If the man will return home after the preferred time, but before the family is sleeping, it is best for the family to light together.

How long do the candles have to burn?

The candles must burn for at least one half hour.

Where is the best place to put my Menorah?

By a window that is in view of the street, or at the very least, that is in view of an alley or courtyard where people walk. If there is no window by which to place the menorah, it should be placed in an area of the house where it will be visible to members of the house.

We are going out for dinner on Friday night. Where should we light?

You must light in your house. If you are nervous to leave the candles near the window, you may light them in a “safer” place.

We will be going to a family Chanukah party in the late afternoon and won't get home until late at night? Should we light before we leave, after we get home or at the party?

You have a few choices...

- 1) If you are leaving your house after the "earliest time" to light Chanukah candles (see chart above), you can light the candles before leaving your house. You must make sure, however, that you use enough oil / big enough candles so the candles will stay lit until the "must burn until" time (see chart above).
- 2) If you are leaving your house before the "earliest time" to light Chanukah candles *OR* are afraid to leave the candles unattended, you must do something (leave a note on your front door or set an alarm) that will remind you to light Chanukah candles when you return home.

We are going away for Shabbat Chanukah. Where should we light on Friday afternoon? If we are coming home on Saturday night, where should we light on Saturday night?

- 1) On Friday afternoon, you should light at the house where you will be staying for Shabbat. You should either light your own menorah (with your own berachot) *OR* you should pay a few cents to the host and become partners with your host in the mitzvah. (*Please Note:* when staying at a stranger's home for a simcha that is taking place at the shul, the halachot may be different)
- 2) On Saturday night, you should light at the house where you stayed for Shabbat and then eat a meal there *OR* you should return home shortly after Shabbat and light at home.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any other questions.

Chanukah Sameach, Rabbi
Leibtag