

## Water Jacket Melters vs. Direct Heat Melters

A question from one of our readers triggered this article, and I thank her for it. I think this is info we can all benefit from, whether it be now, or sometime in the future. Kim in Blue Ridge, GA emailed and asked:

"Which do you prefer or recommend.....Direct heat warmers, or water heater type warmers? I'm planning on investing in a 100 lb or larger unit, and want to do the best thing up front. Any suggestions on what type, and the best place to purchase it would be wonderful ."

I must say, she stumped me. When I was making candles, I made my own make-shift warmer, with to large canning pots, and some water, to create the "double boiler" effect. It allowed me to easily melt 25 to 30 lbs of wax at a time. In the beginning, that was plenty of melted wax, but over time, it wasn't enough, so I understand where she's coming from. To answer her question, I enlisted the knowledge of Candle Equipment & Sales - and got some very useful information. Michelle, of CES was very helpful in explaining the differences - her knowledge is greatly appreciated.

Water Jacket Melters are the most common form of heating. The melter uses hot water to melt the wax, soap or selected material. A thermostatically controlled immersion heater is placed on the bottom half of the tank, and once the thermostat is set at the desired melting or pouring temperature, the unit maintains heat at the setting. It's the ideal method of melting for those manufacturers requiring tighter temperature control.

Water Jacket commercial tanks, 175lb to 1000 lb capacities, offers affordability vs direct heat melters in the commercial sizes.  Water Jacket melters have temperature restrictions at 60-200 degrees F. Manufacturers requiring higher pouring or melting temperatures must use a direct heat melter. Heaters can be replaced on site when using the water jacket melters.

Direct Heat Melters - offer faster melting times! Heaters are either placed at the bottom of the tank or commercial direct heat tanks offer both bottom and side wall heated "Blanket Heating". Direct Heat melters offer thermostats with higher settings. 60-250 F. This is ideal for materials requiring higher melting or pouring temperatures. Direct heat melters are common when melting gel materials. The benefits are that you get a faster melt time! It also allows for flexibility in material choice and have Great batch tanks for melting, mixing color, and scent.

Water Jacket Melters provide the safest method of heating - as they are designed to be left on 24Hrs. Direct Heat Melters must not be left on un-attended, and require turning the unit off at the end of each production day.

Michelle states that CES sales reports for 2004 indicated an even split between the two types of melters being sold. So what do you think; could the differences for many candle makers simply come down to the wax being used? Could it be that simple? If you're currently using a melter, drop us a line and give us your thoughts.  Tell us which type you are using and why.

Until next time - Happy Pouring!

### About the Author

Jean Ann Herley is author of [Stop Burning Time and Money In Your Candle Business](#), an ebook on how to make your candle business thrive with less time, money and research, and owner of [The Candle Making Business Resource](#).

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