

Safety Programs

DECORATIONS POLICY

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The safety of College employees, faculty, students and visitors is paramount. It is crucial that the college facilities are maintained in a condition that will allow for quick and safe evacuation in the event of an emergency. This policy will outline the state and local regulatory requirements designed to provide good fire prevention practices as well as maintaining safe egress (exit) routes.

DEFINITIONS

- **Decorations**, as defined by state code, include all materials such as curtains, draperies, scenery, plastic shields, upholstery materials, streamers, surface coverings applied over the building interior finish for decorative effect, and also cloth, cotton batting, straw vines, leaves, trees and moss used for decorative effect, bamboo and other wood fibers. (Excluded from this definition are ordinary window shades).
- **Combustibles** include any material that will readily ignite when heat sources are present. Some examples are cardboard, paper products, some plastics, wood products, etc.

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR DECORATIONS IN DORMS AND AT FUNCTIONS/EVENTS

The quickest and easiest way to ensure that appropriate guidelines and approvals are obtained for decorations or events is to plan ahead. Please contact the Environmental Health & Safety Office, x3882, for further information.

- **Candles and other open flames**
 - Candles and other open flames are prohibited.
 - Candles may be used for normally recognized religious services only if pre-approved by EH&S and Housing (for Residence Halls) and a fire extinguisher is close by.
 - The use of flash pots, smudge pots, incense, pyrophoric materials, or fire works of any kind for recreations, art, or entertainment is strictly prohibited.
 - Fog type devices are prohibited by WFD. Any items using or creating mist or smoke for theatrical effects must be approved by the WFD through the EH&S Office.
 - By state law no gasoline, propane, or other internal combustion engines are permitted inside the buildings.

- **Fireplaces** should only be used according to the College guidelines available from the EH&S or the Housing Office.
- ***Exits and corridors***
 - Never block, hide, or disguise an exit.
 - Keep exits free and clear from combustibles and obstructions.
 - Decorations or furnishings must not constrict or obstruct corridors.
 - Never place combustibles in corridors, lobbies, stairwells or on corridor walls.
- ***Materials used for decorating***
 - Plastics, styrofoams, and polyurethane foams can not be used for decorations or furnishings.
 - Fabrics and other combustibles should not be hung from the ceiling.
 - Massachusetts Fire Prevention Regulations prohibit flammable decorations such as natural greens, straw, crepe paper, streamers, and surface coverings on building interior finish in school buildings and places of public assembly.
 - Fabrics such as curtains, drapes, furniture coverings, floor coverings, and other fabric hangings must be fire retardant. A certificate of flame proofing is required.
 - Exotic lighting or unusual visual effects utilizing lasers or others unusual optical devices must be approved by the EH&S Office.
 - Avoid the use of decorations with sharp edges or corners.
 - The use of existing conduit, cables, or piping to hang items or equipment is prohibited unless permission is granted. Contact the EH&S Office for further information.
 - Wood frame or other combustible construction on Campus is not permitted without EH&S Office and Physical Plant approval.
 - Combustible materials should be kept at a safe distance or be shielded from sources of heat such as radiators and light bulbs.
- ***Electrical related concerns***
 - Temporary wiring such as extension cords and multiple outlet strips must be approved by the EH&S Office for use with lighting or sound equipment and lighted decorations.
 - Extension cords are for temporary use only. During the holiday season they should not be used in a way that will create a fire, tripping, or electrical hazard.
 - The cords must be UL listed, be a minimum of 16 gauge wire (this excludes #18 lamp wire also known as "zip" cord), and be properly plugged into a wall outlet. Extension cords can not be connected to each other

ALL activities requiring pre-approval must be made at least 2 weeks in advance. Inquiries made after that time are not guaranteed of review for approval.

WINTER HOLIDAY SEASON

The Winter Holiday season brings other types of decorations to the College. In addition to the College's Decoration Policy, the following guidelines are issued by the EH&S Office for seasonal decorations.

- ***Trees and decorations***
 - Artificial flameproofed "Holiday" trees and related decorations are permitted in offices, enclosed lounges (but not those connected to lobbies, corridors, or open public areas), and other non-public areas.
 - Trees are not permitted in corridors, aisles, passageways, or stairways. They must not obstruct an exit or narrow a pathway to the exit. Trees and related decorations are not allowed to obstruct the usual view of exit signs or emergency lighting.
 - Only labeled flame retardant, UL listed, or classified artificial trees, wreaths, boughs, greenery, and other decorations are permitted. All "Holiday" trees and decorative boughs must be artificial with an approved flame retardant label. Noncombustible decorations are permitted.
 - Natural trees (cut or alive), natural wreaths, boughs, or greenery are not permitted.
 - The use of Holiday cards, wrapping paper, and streamers to decorate exit corridor walls is prohibited.
 - Flammable decorations are prohibited.
- ***Tree lights***
 - Only UL approved lights rated for use on artificial trees are to be used. They are often called "mini-lights" or "twinkle lights". Larger tree lights normally used on natural trees generate enough heat to melt plastic and ignite decorations.
 - Remote spotlights are recommended for use with metal trees to avoid an electrical shock hazard from electrical lighting.
 - The use of tree lights, electric ornaments, and extension cords in corridors and over exit doors are prohibited.
 - Lights cannot remain in place for more than 60 days while school is in session.
- ***General Requirements***
 - All exit doors shall not be blocked/obstructed and be readily opened.
 - Obstructions of any kind, including tables and chairs, shall not be permitted in aisles, corridors or passageways.
 - Candles and other open flames are prohibited. Open flame devices, such as lanterns, etc., intended to be used for decorative purposes, are prohibited.
 - Dispose of wrappings immediately.
 - In case of fire, immediately pull the alarm and call Campus Police, x5555.

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