



Holiday Decorating and Fire Safety

Dear Colleagues:

Many campus offices are decorated each holiday season. Because decorations combine highly combustible materials with additional sources of heat, the potential for fire increases. EH&S would like to remind faculty, staff and students of the following points which will help ensure a safe and happy holiday season:

Trees

- Trees and greenery should be artificial. KY fire code does not allow natural trees inside State buildings. The trees and greenery should have the U.L. label stating flame retardant material.
- **Live trees, wreaths, branches, hay bales, etc. are not to be placed in any University buildings because they are a fire hazard.**

Electrical

- Be sure all electrical items are in good condition and have U.L. labels. Use low heat output indoor electrical bulbs and make sure they do not make contact with combustible materials.
- Ground fault interrupters (GFI) are required for exterior light displays.
- No extension cords indoors.
- No electrical cords may be routed through doorways of any type. The opening and closing of the door will cause damage to the cord and also facilitate a tripping hazard. Additionally, no electrical cords can be placed under a rug or carpet. Walking over rugs or carpets will damage the cord and become a fire hazard.
- No use of smoke generating machines.

Decorations

- Decorations and trees must not cover fire alarm devices (pull stations, smoke detectors, heat detectors, etc.), fire extinguishers, exit signs, exit doors, etc., or negate the purpose of these devices. Be sure all corridors and exits are clear and available for routine use.
- Candles and other open flames are not allowed. Decorative candles, etc. are a huge fire risk and violate fire safety codes.
- No items may be attached to or hung from sprinkler heads or sprinkler system piping. This is a particularly important requirement because of the potential for breaking the heads, pipes or pipe hangers.
- Paper and/or flammable decorations should not cover more than 20% of the surface area of any wall or door.
- Please exercise caution with the use of spray applied artificial snow. This type of decoration may irritate lungs and will set off smoke detectors faster than you can say "Ho Ho Ho!"
- Take decorations down after the holidays and dispose of them properly or store them in a safe place.

General Safety

- Use ladders - not chairs, stepstools or boxes when installing decorations in high locations.
- NFPA Christmas Tree Fire Video
<http://www.nfpa.org/safety%20information/for%20consumers/holidays/christmas%20tree%20fi%20res.aspx>