

PORTLAND FIRE & RESCUE

March 13, 2018



FIR 3.02 – HOLIDAY DÉCOR AND FIRE SAFETY

I. SCOPE

- A. This policy is established September 1, 1989.
- B. The purpose of this policy is to provide uniform enforcement of fire safety regulations relating to temporary decorations, lighting, and fire safety in all occupancies regulated by this office.
- C. All occupancies regulated by this office shall comply with the applicable requirements of this policy.
- D. This office recognizes that holiday seasons call for additional and specialized decorations and lighting. Such decorations and lighting can have a significant impact on the designed fire safety features of buildings and gathering places. To allow the increased enjoyment of the season without jeopardizing the public safety, this office has developed the following policy.

II. SPECIFIC

- A. References
 - 1. Portland Title 31
 - 2. 2016 Portland Fire Code
 - 3. 2014 Oregon Fire Code

III. GUIDANCE

- A. Egress
 - 1. Access to exits and exit paths shall not be obstructed by decorative materials or other items.
- B. Sources of Ignition
 - 1. Candles or other sources of open flame are not allowed for any decorations or ceremonies, except as approved by the fire authority, prior to the event.
 - 2. Sources of ignition shall not be allowed within the vicinity of combustible decorative materials.

C. Electrical

1. Only UL listed miniature lights shall be allowed when used in accordance with their listing.
2. Only grounded, heavy-duty extension cords that are commercially manufactured and UL Listed assemblies (not less than 14 gauge, not less than 15 amp) shall be allowed. (No "Household", lightweight, or home-built cords are allowed.)
3. Electric lights and extension cords that are physically damaged or altered shall not be used unless repairs are in accordance with the Electrical Code.
4. When a building is unoccupied, disconnect the power supply to all electrically energized decorations. **Exception:** *Exterior window displays.*

D. Decorative Materials

1. Natural vegetation, including cut Christmas trees:
 - a. Fire-retardant coatings are not required on natural trees. Coatings, including flocking, will not extend the length of time a tree should be permitted indoors. While freshly cut trees are naturally flame resistant due to their high water content, they become extremely flammable when permitted to dry out. When brought indoors the heat and lower humidity will accelerate the drying process.
 - b. Care of Christmas trees shall be as follows:
 - i) Saw off at an angle at least one inch above the original cut.
 - ii) Mount securely in a tree stand, pail, tub, or other water-type reservoir.
 - iii) Maintain the water level above the cut while the tree is indoors and add fresh water daily.

Note: The tree will last longer if not placed near heat sources.
 - c. Decorations made of natural materials shall be removed at any indication of dryness, such as brittleness, loss of color, or fallen needles. Christmas trees and other natural holiday decorations shall be removed if the building is unoccupied for more than three days.
2. Artificial Decorations
 - a. Artificial decorations may have electrical devices used in accordance with manufacturer's instructions. **Exception:** *Artificial decorations having exposed metal surfaces shall not be decorated with any type of electrical devices, decorations or appliances.*
3. All decorations shall be either inherently fire retardant or treated with a flame retardant to be flame resistant and shall meet flame propagation performance criteria of NFPA 701 in accordance with 2016 Portland Fire Code section 807.2 or be noncombustible.

E. Occupancy Specific Guidelines:

1. **Assemblies:** Assembly buildings or rooms shall not exceed the posted occupancy load or as approved by the fire authority.
2. **Schools:** Decorations, including student-generated materials, shall not exceed 20% of the wall and 10% of the door surface at any time of the year.
3. **Health Care, Residential Care and Assisted Living Facility:**
 - a. Christmas trees shall not be in patient rooms.
Exception: *A live Christmas tree is allowed if it does not exceed 24 inches in height, including pot. Pot not to exceed 9 inches in diameter.*
Exception: *An imitation tree of non-combustible material is allowed if it does not exceed 24 inches in height.*
 - b. No electrical decorations are allowed on Christmas trees in patient rooms.
Exception: *Battery operated, listed mini lights may be used with the approval of the chief engineer or facility manager.*
 - c. Decoration material shall not cover more than 20% of walls and 10% of doors.
 - d. Rated, listed mini lights may be used around the inner framing of an outside wall window with the approval of the chief engineer or facility manager.
4. **Foster Care Homes:** Christmas trees shall not be in sleeping rooms.
5. Contact the local fire authority for temporary membrane structures, tents and canopies, haunted houses, outdoor carnivals, fairs and other places of assembly.
6. Contact the Portland Fire Marshal's Office for fireworks displays and permits.
7. **Jails and Correctional Facilities:**
 - a. At the Institution's discretion, for security purposes, follow the same guidelines as section E.3. above.
 - b. In addition, natural trees shall be placed under a sprinkler head. If the facility is not sprinkled, natural trees shall be placed under a smoke or heat detector.



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