

# Decorations

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## University of Tennessee Safety Policy FS-030

**Document Contact:** EHS-Fire Safety

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### Purpose, Applicability, and Scope

**Purpose** – The purpose of this document is to provide guidance on the use of decorations in university buildings

**Applicability** – This shall apply to all students, staff and faculty on the Knoxville campus of the University of Tennessee.

**Scope** – This standard applies to all decorations in spaces under the primary control of the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

### Definitions and Abbreviations

#### Abbreviations

**EHS** – Environmental Health and Safety

**FM** – Factory Mutual

**IFC** – International Fire Code

**LED** – Light-emitting diode

**NFPA** – National Fire Protection Association

**UL** – Underwriters Laboratory

### Roles and Responsibilities

#### Environmental Health and Safety shall:

- Maintain this policy in the safety manual.
- Include decorations as part of the annual safety inspections.
- Disseminate this policy during early October each year.
- Interpret policies base on regulatory perspectives or recognized safety management.

#### Department heads shall:

- Disseminate this policy as necessary.
- Implement this policy
- Consult EHS on questions related to implementation of this policy if necessary.

#### Employees shall:

- Follow the procedure detailed in this policy

- Forward questions, comments and concerns related to policies to their supervisor.

## Procedures

The following requirements are based on standards from the National Fire Protection Association, the International Fire Code

### Power Cords

- The use of extension cords should be limited to the extent possible.
- Light-weight (lamp cord) extension cords shall not be used.
- Do not place cords beneath carpets and rugs or cross doorways or window openings.
- Must not be wrapped around a nail or subject to other physical damage.
- Shall not be stapled to any building structure including but not limited to wall, ceiling, floor or baseboard.
- Discard cords with frayed insulation or damaged plugs such as those with a ground prong missing.
- Do not overload electrical circuits. The use of octopus connection (also known as multiple connection devices or cube taps) is prohibited.
- Power strips are acceptable providing they are plugged directly into a wall outlet. Daisy chaining (plugged one into another) power strips one into another is not allowed.

### Decorative Lights

- Must be UL approved and turned off at the end of each work day.
- Limit non-LED lights to no more than 3 sets in series.
- Are not permitted on metal trees. Note that fiberoptic type lights are acceptable.
- Must not be wrapped around any building structure including but not limited to including sprinkler lines.
- Consider using LED lights. They draw less electricity and have a lower temperature.
- Outdoor lights shall be installed or approved by Facilities Services.
- Do not use incandescent lights.

### Candles and Open Flame

- Candles and similar open-flame decorations are not permitted.

### Trees

- Live or cut trees are prohibited for use inside buildings.
- Artificial trees shall be labeled or identified as being flame retardant or flame resistant.
- Trees shall not impair the required width of any component (e.g. hallways) of egress.

### Decorations

- Shall not obstruct exit signs, the clear path to an exit, view of an exit, a fire alarm pull station or fire extinguisher.
- Decorations must allow for at least 18 inches of free space between them and the bottom of a sprinkler head.
- Must be flame resistant or flame retardant.
- No decorative materials may be attached to, be suspended from or cover any part of the ceiling including light fixtures.

- Must not be attached to any window frames, walls, doors or door frames by any method that damages the finish when removed. This would include nails, tacks, brads, staples, screws and adhesives unless Facilities Services has approved charge work orders to repair any damages when finished. Some finishes can't be effectively repaired like marble so it may be best to get these installations approved both for safety and building preservation ahead of time.
- Any decoration material which is normally considered flammable, such as batting, cloth, cotton, hay, stalks, straw, vines, leaves, trees, moss, corn stalks, crepe paper and similar materials must be of fire resistant quality and should bear the seal of approval of the FM or UL.
- The flame propagation criteria of NFPA 701 shall not exceed 10 percent of the specific wall. Example – posters and other paper materials shall not cover more than 10% of the wall.
- Plastics, Styrofoam's, and polyurethane foams cannot be used for decorations or furnishings.
- Any outdoor structures, trees, lights, etc. must receive written approval from Facilities Services and EHS.
- Garland, lights, or other decorations shall not be wrapped around or attached to handrails.
- Decorations should not cover any signs, including door numbers, lab hazard posting, and similar postings.

## Recordkeeping

None

## Training and Information

EHS shall disseminate this policy or section 4 (procedures) of this document during the first week of October annually.

## Regulatory Drivers and References

IFC

NFPA 1 – (Fire Code)

NFPA 101 (Life Safety Code)

## Appendices

None

## Disclaimer

The information provided in these guidelines is designed for educational use only and is not a substitute for specific training or experience.

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