



Duke Occupational & Environmental Safety Office

DUKE UNIVERSITY HEALTH SYSTEM FACILITY DECORATIONS

OFFICE OF PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY

Duke OESO-Fire and Life Safety Div.: W. Chris Allan
Certified By: Fred J. Knipper, Director

(919) 668-3233
(919) 668-3231
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This document establishes policy and procedures and assigns responsibilities and requirements to ensure a comprehensive decorations operational instruction exists for Duke University Health System facilities. It applies to all Duke University Health System facilities and employees. Additional information may be found in the *Duke University Safety Manual: Fire Protection* chapter: https://www.safety.duke.edu/sites/default/files/IV_1FireProtection.pdf

1. Objective

- 1.1. Ensure compliance with all relevant fire and life safety code requirements including the *North Carolina Fire Code* and *National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 101: Life Safety Code*.

2. Purpose

- 2.1. Provide guidance to allow decorations to be displayed while maintaining compliance with all relevant fire and life safety codes.

3. Definitions

- 3.1 Decorative Materials: Decorative materials include, but are not limited to: curtains, draperies, fabrics, streamers, bulletin boards, artwork, posters, photographs, paintings, etc.
- 3.2 Suspended: Suspended means hanging, taped, tacked or attached in any manner that any portion of the item can be easily lifted away from the wall, creating an air gap.

4 NC Fire Code and The Joint Commission Requirements for all fully-sprinklered occupancy types (in-patient, out-patient, and business areas)

- 4.1 Curtains and all other fabric decorations shall comply with NFPA 701.
 - 4.1.1 Patient privacy curtains or curtains used in a similar fashion in non-patient care areas shall have a 70% open weave that extends at least 18 inches from the bottom of the sprinkler deflector.
 - 4.1.2 All manufacturer recommendations for laundering shall be adhered to in order to maintain the fire retardant properties.
 - 4.1.3 Curtains shall be repaired or replaced in accordance with manufacturer recommendations.
 - 4.1.4 **EXCEPTION**: Curtains used for shower/bath areas are not required to be NFPA 701 compliant.

- 4.1.5 **EXCEPTION:** Curtains and draperies at windows in patient sleeping rooms are not required to be NFPA 701 compliant.
- 4.1.6 **EXCEPTION:** Draperies and curtains outside of patient care areas are not required to be NFPA 701 compliant provided ALL of the following conditions are met:
 - 4.1.6.1 The individual drapery or curtain panel area does not exceed 48 square feet.
 - 4.1.6.2 Total area of drapery and curtain panels per room or area does not exceed 20% of the aggregate area of the wall on which they are located.
 - 4.1.6.3 The smoke compartment in which the draperies or curtains are located is protected by sprinklers.
- 4.2 Prohibited Conditions
 - 4.2.1 Explosive, highly flammable, combustible fibers, or any other materials which pose an unusually high hazard (e.g. foam board)
 - 4.2.2 Three-dimensional items attached to a wall or door.
 - 4.2.3 Items cannot be suspended from a ceiling.
 - 4.2.4 Anything covering or obstructing exits, access to/from, visibility of any fire/life safety fixture or system component (e.g., EXIT signs, exit doors, exit access doors, door handles, fire alarm pull stations, fire extinguishers, strobe lights, etc.) in any manner.
 - 4.2.5 Easels or similar displays (“pop up,” free standing banners).
 - 4.2.6 Decorations cannot be attached to fire-rated doors with one exception listed below:
 - 4.2.6.1 Informational room signage: permitted if it does not exceed 5% of the total surface area of the door (typically 8 ½” x 11”), firmly attached to the door with adhesive only.
- 5 **Business Occupancy and Out-patient Clinics that are fully-sprinklered**
 - 5.1 Combustible decorative materials shall be limited to 10% of the wall or ceiling face to which they are affixed.
- 6 **Business Occupancy and Out-patient Clinics that are not fully-sprinklered**
 - 6.1 Combustible decorative materials shall be limited to such quantities that fire propagation is considered negligible.
- 7 **Hospitals and Ambulatory Surgical Centers that are fully-sprinklered**
 - 7.1 Combustible decorations shall be attached in such a manner that they are not suspended.
 - 7.2 Combustible decorations on non-fire-rated doors shall not interfere with the operation or required latching.
 - 7.3 Combustible decorations in all corridors that are not within a patient care unit shall not exceed 10% of the wall or ceiling area to which they are affixed.
 - 7.4 Within a patient care unit, combustibles decorations shall not exceed 30% of the wall, ceiling, or non-fire-rated door areas **inside** any room or space of a smoke compartment.
 - 7.5 Combustible decorations shall not exceed 50% of the wall, ceiling, or door areas **inside** patient sleeping rooms having a capacity not exceeding four persons in a smoke compartment.

8 Compliance Strategies

- 8.1 The amount of non-combustible decorations is not limited or restricted.
- 8.2 Foam board shall not be used.
- 8.3 Specially manufactured products that meet Class A interior finish requirements may be available as a substitute for combustible decorations.
- 8.4 Decorations purchased should meet the characteristic of being flame-retardant.
- 8.5 Consider using a common network drive for informational notices instead of a physical bulletin board (e.g., “Electronic Bulletin Board”).
- 8.6 Decorative items including papers shall not extend past the perimeter of the bulletin board or approved wall area and shall be fastened securely to prevent air gaps.
- 8.7 In lieu of curtains, use metal Venetian style blinds or other non-combustible window coverings.
- 8.8 Metal frames with a tempered glass front may be used to encase items that are otherwise combustible.

9 Holiday and Theme Party Decorations

- 9.1 Refer to the *Duke University Safety Manual: Fire Protection* chapter for detailed information. https://www.safety.duke.edu/sites/default/files/IV_1FireProtection.pdf