

## **University Decorations and Theme Party Policy**

This policy applies to all Duke University facilities to include Campus, Medical Center, Hospital and Health System. All students, visitors, and employees must adhere to this policy when planning a theme party, event, meeting, or decorating any work area. If you have any questions as to whether your decorations fall within the limits allowed by this policy, please contact the Occupational and Environmental Safety Office-Fire Safety Division at 684-5609, 72 hours prior to the date of the actual event/party or placement of the decorations.

### **General Restrictions:**

Fog and smoke machines may not be used inside facilities without written authorization of the OESO-Fire Safety Division.

Animal(s), regardless of size or species, are strictly prohibited to attend or participate in any event, party, or meeting.

Water, waterfalls, pools, spraying water, running water, or utilizing water in any way is strictly prohibited.

Combustible natural decorations such as straw, hay, corn fodder, dried flowers, bamboo, and other similar decorations are prohibited as decoration inside facilities without written authorization from the OESO-Fire Safety Division.

Combustible decorations shall be prohibited in all healthcare occupancies (Hospital, Duke Clinic, PDC, etc) unless they are flame retardant. (Exception: Combustible decorations, such as photographs and paintings, in such limited quantities that a hazard of fire development or spread is not present).

All doors (i.e. exit, smoke, fire, interior, exterior), hallways or any other means of egress may not be covered or blocked in any manner by decorations.

Trash must not be allowed to accumulate, but collected in appropriate containers during the event and removed at the close of the event.

### **Electrical Safety and Holiday Lighting:**

All electrical lights, electrical equipment, animated or electrical decorations must be UL listed.

Manufacturer's instruction and precautions shall be followed.

Each living group or office should have an appointed representative to ensure that the electrical decorations are de-energized at the end of the day.

Any light string with worn, frayed, broken cords, loose bulb connections, and empty sockets shall not be used.

Use of Holiday lights and light strings should be limited to reduce overheating.

Lights shall not have more than three strings of light connected to each other

The use of lights and wiring on a Metal Christmas Trees (Aluminum Trees from the 50's & 60's as defined by the NC Department of Insurance) is prohibited. Fiber Optic and pre-wired artificial trees are acceptable as long as they are UL listed.

Only indoor lights will be used inside facilities.

Light strings or electrical decorations shall be de-energized before replacing bulbs or fuses.

Light strings must be mounted in a manner that will not damage the cord's insulation.

Light strings should be plugged directly into an outlet or an electrical surge protector with built-in circuit breaker.

### **Holiday Decorations:**

#### *General:*

All decorations (to include artificial greenery such as wreaths and holly) must be non-combustible, inherently flame resistant or treated with an approved fire retardant in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications that will pass NFPA 701 test. Decorative materials shall not exceed 10% of the aggregate of wall and ceilings.

All combustible party decorations shall be removed from the area immediately following the event.

**Exception:** During the Christmas Holiday decorations should be removed no later than December 30<sup>th</sup>. Residence halls should have all decorations removed no later than the closing of the residence halls by Residence Life and Housing Services.

#### *Live Greenery and Christmas Trees:*

Live greenery, such as Christmas trees, pine wreaths and holly, are prohibited inside of the Hospital, Medical Center facilities and Residence Halls. In addition, live greenery is prohibited in assembly areas, education facilities, schools, day cares, stores, businesses, residence halls, and hotels unless the building is protected throughout with an approved automatic sprinkler system.

Artificial greenery may be utilized if it meets the general and electrical requirements as listed above.

Where Christmas trees and live greenery are allowed by Code, they must adhere to the following:

- Only one tree will be purchased for each department or group and the tree will be located in a common area, reception area or lounge.
- All trees shall be prepared by sawing off the trunk of the tree at an angle at least one half inch or more above the original cut and spraying the tree with an approved fire retardant in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications as required by NC State Building Code.
- The tree will be placed within a tree holder/ stand capable of containing water to prevent drying. The stand will be checked daily to assure the water level is adequate.
- Live greenery shall not be placed near any heat sources (direct or radiant).
- Smoking or open flames shall be prohibited near live greenery.
- The tree shall be removed from the facility whenever the needles or leaves fall off readily when a tree branch is shaken or if the needles are brittle and break when bent between the thumb and the index finger.

### **Candle Safety:**

Candles or other open flames are strictly forbidden for use inside **all** University facilities. The only exception to this policy is the use of candles during recognized religious ceremonies. Those individuals wishing to utilize candles in observance of a religious holiday should first contact OESO-Fire Safety Division to obtain information concerning fire prevention. If the Fire Safety Division has approved the use of a candle(s), these basic guidelines should be followed:

#### General Safety

- Whenever possible, substitute open flame candles with battery operated or electrical powered candles.
- Never leave a lighted candle unattended.
- Never touch or move a votive or container candle when the wax is still liquid.
- Do not let children play around candles.

#### Placement

- Keep area around the flame and each candle free and clear of combustible or flammable materials. Do not use candles around oxygen or flammable gases.
- Candles shall not be placed on window sills, aisle passageways or other areas that may be unstable or where one could come into contact with it
- Candles shall not be used in close proximity to sprinkler heads or smoke detectors, so as not to accidentally activate one of these devices.
- Always burn a candle upright.

#### HOLDERS

- Always place a candle on a stable surface and in a holder that will not topple
- Make sure the candleholder is fire resistant (Note: Open flame candles should not be used with Advent Wreaths, which are usually made of dried plants, plastic or silk).
- Try to fully enclose the flame using a glass jar, storm lantern, or restaurant style candle.
- Extinguish the candle when it comes close to the holder (2 inches of wax remain)

## Maintenance

- Trim wax to  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch prior to each use.
- Keep wax pool free of wick trimmings, matches, and other debris at all times.