



OREGON FIRE CODE

Interpretations and Technical Advisories

A collaborative service by local and state fire professionals, along with our stakeholders, and customers, to provide consistent and concise application of Oregon's fire prevention and life safety regulations.

Date: August 20, 2008

Ruling: Technical Advisory No. 08-03

Subject: Holiday Décor and Fire Safety Guidelines

Code Reference: 2007 Oregon Fire Code

Subject: Guidance on the use of decorative items during traditional holidays but these guidelines may be utilized at any time of the year.

Contents: For the purposes of this technical advisory, the following shall apply:

EGRESS Access to exits and exit paths shall not be obstructed by decorative materials.

SOURCES OF IGNITION

- Candles and other sources of open flame are not allowed for any decorations or ceremonies, except as approved by the fire authority prior to the event.
- Sources of ignition shall not be allowed within the vicinity of combustible decorative materials.

ELECTRICAL

- Only UL listed miniature lights shall be used, in accordance with their listing.
- Heavy duty extension cords shall be approved commercially manufactured UL listed assemblies (14-gauge minimum), 15-amp minimum). Only grounded extension cords shall be used.
- Electrical lights and extension cords that are physically damaged or altered shall not be used unless repairs are in accordance with the state adopted electrical code.

DECORATIVE MATERIALS

- Natural vegetation, including cut Christmas trees.
Fire-retardant coatings are not required on natural trees and 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.

Care of Christmas trees shall be as follows:

- Sawed off at an angle at least one inch above the original cut.
- Mounted securely in a tree stand, pail, tub, or other water-type holder or reservoir.
- Maintain the water level above the cut as long as the tree is indoors and add fresh water daily.

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 (30 days).

- 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.
- All decorations shall be either inherently fire retardant or treated with a flame retardant to be flame resistant and shall comply with the Oregon Fire Code 2007 Edition, Section 807

OCCUPANCY SPECIFIC GUIDELINES

- Assemblies – Assembly buildings or rooms shall not exceed the posted occupancy load or as approved by the fire authority.
- Schools – Decorations, including student-generated materials, on the walls of corridors shall not exceed 20% of the wall area.
 - **All three-dimensional artwork in routes of egress shall be limited in size (no greater than one bulletin board with dimensions of four (4) feet by ten (10) feet) provided with a clear area around it that is equal to the size of the display, and inherently fire resistant.**
- Health Care, Residential Care and Assisted Living Facilities.
 - Christmas trees shall not be in patient rooms.
Exceptions:
 - 1) A live Christmas tree not exceeding 24 inches in height, including the pot. Pots shall not exceed 9 inches in diameter.
 - 2) An imitation tree of non-combustible material not exceeding 24 inches in height.
 - 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.

- Decorative material shall not exceed more than 20% of corridor walls area.
- 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.
- Foster Care Homes – Christmas trees shall not be in sleeping rooms.
- Contact the local fire authority for temporary membrane structures, tents and canopies, haunted houses, outdoor carnivals, fairs and other places of assembly.
- Contact local fire authority for fireworks displays. Contact the Office of State Fire Marshal for required permits.
- Jails and Correctional Facilities.
 - At the Institution's discretion, for security purposes follow the same guidelines as Occupancy Specific Guidelines for Health Care, Residential Care and Assisted Living Facilities.
 - In addition, natural trees shall be placed under a sprinkler head. If the facility is not sprinklered, natural trees shall be placed under a smoke or heat detector.

Other References: NFPA 101