

Decorating for the Holiday Season (12/92)

NY State Education Department:

http://www.p12.nysed.gov/facplan/articles/om001_holiday_season_decorating.html

Once again the holiday season is upon us. The following considerations will help avoid creating fire and life-safety hazards in school facilities, due to the indiscriminate use of inappropriate decorations.

A. Christmas Trees

Use only artificial Christmas trees that bear the Underwriter's Laboratory (UL) label. There is no aesthetic advantage of a natural tree over one of the better types of synthetic trees available today. Be sure that Christmas tree stands are of sturdy construction and are large enough to safely and adequately support the tree.

In decorating Christmas trees, as in all other decorative lighting applications, use only light leads made for the newer cool-burning miniature bulbs. Light leads must contain an integral fuse in or near the male plug, and must also be UL labelled. Do not exceed manufacturer's recommendations regarding the maximum number of lights that may be used in a combination of leads or that may be plugged into one outlet.

Place the tree so that only a short extension cord need be used to connect the light lead, without creating a tripping hazard. Be sure that the extension cord is heavy enough to accept the applied electric load.

Use break-resistant Christmas tree ornaments only. Being extremely fragile, traditional glass ornaments shatter upon impact, and can cause injury.

B. Placement of Christmas Trees

Do not place Christmas trees in corridors. Corridors and areas of travel through lobbies and other open spaces must be kept clear at all times, with no obstruction to the free flow of traffic.

In auditoriums, cafeterias and other similar areas of assembly, and in lobbies, place the Christmas tree in a location well away from the path of travel to any of the exits.

C. Decorations

Used as combustible decorations, untreated paper and plastics and natural tree boughs present fire hazards far beyond any artistic values achieved. Use only decorations which bear the UL label or are certified by the manufacturer to be flame resistant.