

Holiday Decoration Recommendations

Food, family, friends, gifts, and decorations are all highlights of the holiday season. Unfortunately, these holiday festivities can present unique fire hazards. According to the National Fire Protection Association, December is the leading month for fires due to the many holiday traditions we engage in. As the holiday season approaches, Ithaca College Office of Environmental Health and Safety would like to remind everyone in the IC community of the following guidelines and safety tips regarding proper use of holiday decorations. By knowing where potential fire hazards exist, every member of the IC community can enjoy a festive, fire-free holiday season.

TREES

Live-Cut Trees are only permitted in main lobby areas of academic and office buildings.

Live-cut trees are never permitted in residential buildings or offices.

- Live-Cut trees must be supported by a commercial tree stand.
- The water reservoir must be checked daily and be always kept full while tree is displayed.
- Never block escape routes or obstruct emergency equipment.
- Tree must be removed from building when signs of drying are observed.

******* Live-Cut trees must be removed before winter break. *******

Live-Cut Boughs may be used for table decorations at one time only special events. Never attach Live-Cut boughs to interior/exterior walls, doors, stairwells, handrails, etc.

Small Artificial Trees are allowed, but also require care in selection and use.

- Choose a tree that is constructed of non-combustible fire-resistant materials.
- Place your tree in a safe area away from heat sources. Also do not place your tree in an area where it can be knocked over.
- Do not place your tree in hallways, stairwells or in front of doors. Do not block emergency escape routes.
- Do not obstruct exit lighting, fire alarm pull-stations, fire extinguishers, smoke detectors, fire sprinkler heads or other safety equipment.
- Do not overload the tree with lights or decorations. Too much weight could cause the tree to tip over.

LIGHTS

Electric miniature lights are permitted inside student rooms but cannot be plugged into each other. Strands must be used in accordance with manufacturer's instructions and are limited to only 100 bulbs per room.

- Use only Underwriters Laboratory (UL) certified lights and decorations.
- Do not use lights or decorations that are frayed, damaged or have loose wires.
- Do not wrap or attach lights to fire sprinkler piping, fire sprinkler heads, smoke detectors or other emergency / safety equipment.
- Do not wrap or attach lights to bedposts, bed frames ceilings or over entrance doors.
- Turn off the lights when leaving the area or going to bed. Never leave lights on overnight.

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CANDLES

Candles, oil lamps, incense, and other flame producing items are strictly prohibited in any campus building, unless approved in advance by Environmental Health and Safety. Please consider using battery-operated flameless candles which can look, smell, and feel like real candles.

Candles used for ceremonial purposes can be lit only in designated areas. Individuals or groups must follow Ithaca College's Religious Accommodation Process and obtain authorization from both the Office of Religious and Spiritual Life **and** the Office of Environmental Health and Safety.

ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES

- Extension cords are prohibited in all residential buildings.
- Extension cords may be used for temporary holiday lighting in academic and office buildings.
- Never place cords under rugs or through windows or doors. Do not create a trip hazard with cords.
- Only non-flammable or fire-retardant holiday decorations may be used.
- The use of glitter or natural straw is prohibited.
- Doors shall not be gift-wrapped. Excessive decorations or decorations made of highly flammable materials (crepe paper, leaves, plastic, etc.) are prohibited.
- Decorations cannot be attached to, block or be suspended from sprinkler pipes, smoke detectors, electrical systems, light fixtures, cameras, ceilings, stairways, exit signs, exit doors, or any other emergency or safety equipment.
- Decorations must not block or obstruct access to hallways, exits or stairways.
- Keep all lights and decorations away from combustible items.
- All decorations must be turned off before leaving the room.
- Decorations must not affect the operation of windows or in room heating units.

******* All decorations must be removed before leaving for Winter Break *******

The above recommendations contained are intended to assist in identifying and complying with New York State Fire Code, National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Life Safety Code, and Occupational Safety and Health (OSHA) Standards. The Office of Environmental Health and Safety reserves the right to inspect all lighting and decorations for compliance with established codes and laws. Lighting and decorations determined to be unsafe will be removed immediately upon request.

Any questions concerning the use of holiday decorations or NYS Fire Code may be directed to Environmental Health and Safety at 607.274.3353.

**In case of fire call the Office of Public Safety at
607.274.3333
or Dial 911**

Follow the evacuation procedures for your building.