



CITY OF MADISON FIRE DEPARTMENT

Fire Prevention Division

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SEASONAL DECORATION REQUIREMENTS

The following International Fire Code (IFC) requirements apply to mercantile occupancies, schools, hospitals, nursing homes and places of assembly such as churches, restaurants and theaters:

A. TREES

1. Artificial trees shall be flame retardant or nonflammable. IFC Section 806.2
Natural trees shall have the trunk cut at least one inch above the cut immediately prior to being placed in water. The water level shall be maintained above the cut. IFC Section 806.1.2
2. Trees shall not be placed so as to block any exit or exit access. IFC Section 806.3
3. Trees shall be disposed of as soon as possible after use.
4. Trees commercially flocked will be accepted as flameproof but should be placed in a stand containing water.
5. U.S. Forest Products Laboratory at the University of Wisconsin has stated that products currently available for flameproofing are ineffective on natural cut trees. Coating the needle prevents the tree from breathing, reducing water up-take and actually enhances the tree's drying out.
6. Trees and decorations shall be located a safe distance from ignition sources such as heaters, lights, fireplaces, stoves & candles. IFC Section 806.4
7. Trees shall be checked daily for dryness. The tree shall be removed from the building whenever the needles or leaves fall off readily or if the needles are brittle and break when bent between the thumb and index finger. IFC Section 806.1.3

B. DECORATIONS

1. All decorations suspended from walls or ceilings, including wreaths, shall be flame resistant or noncombustible. IFC Section 807.1 (IFC Section 807 does not apply to Mercantile occupancies.)
2. Do not cover walls or ceilings with paper or other types of combustible decorations.
3. Wax candles are not allowed under any circumstances. IFC Section 806.4
4. Open flame decorative devices must comply with IFC Section 308.

C. ELECTRIC WIRING AND LIGHTS

1. Lights may be used provided that they are listed or approved by a recognized testing laboratory such as the Underwriters Laboratories. IFC Section 806.5
2. Trees with built-in lights shall carry the U.L. Authorized Label.
3. Metal trees shall be illuminated by indirect lighting to eliminate electric shock hazard. IFC Section 806.5
4. Check all light sets, extension cords, etc., for frayed wires, loose connections and broken sockets.
5. Turn off all lights before leaving premises.
6. For outdoor lighting use light sets listed for outdoor use.
7. Do not nail or staple electric cords to any wall, ceiling or floor.

If you have any questions, concerns or would like copies of the applicable code sections regarding seasonal decorations please call the Madison Fire Department - Fire Prevention Division at (608) 266-4484.