

**UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, MERCED  
STATEMENT ON CAMPUS POLICY  
HOLIDAY DECORATIONS**

RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL: Assistant Vice Chancellor, Facilities Management

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**REFERENCES AND RESOURCES:**

- [https://www.ou.edu/content/risk/fire\\_marshall/decor.html](https://www.ou.edu/content/risk/fire_marshall/decor.html)
- <http://www.publicsafety.upenn.edu/assets/SafetyGuidelines/HOLIDAY-DECORATIONS.pdf>

**BACKGROUND:**

**POLICY:**

**The following is a summary of some, but not all, of the requirements for decorations within campus buildings.**

Decorations:

- Cut and/or live trees and flammable decorations are not permitted.
- Only those materials labeled as *noncombustible*, *flame-resistant*, or *flame-retardant* may be used.
- Do not block or obscure exits, passageways to exits, or exit and emergency lights.
- Use of open flame, such as decorative candles, is strictly prohibited.
- Combustible decorations such as tapestries, fishnets, parachutes, sheets and paper may not be hung from walls or ceilings.
- The use of Styrofoam, Polyurethane foams and other types of combustible foams in decorations is strictly prohibited.
- All decorations must allow at least 18 inches between the top of the decorations and the bottom of the sprinkler head.
- Decorations must be installed so that they do not block the path of water spray from sprinklers to the floor.
- Decorations of any kind must not be attached to any fire sprinkler and/or piping.
- All stairwell doors need to remain clearly visible and unobstructed by the placement of decorations. In order to keep the exit doors readily visible, decorations may not be placed on exit doors.
- Decorations are prohibited near heat sources, including light bulbs. A 3'0" minimum separation distance must be maintained at all times, to allow for proper ADA access.

These materials ***may not be used*** for decorations under ***any*** circumstances, because they are inherently combustible and/or cannot be flame proofed:

- Bamboo
- Cedar Trees or Branches
- Corn Stalks or Shucks
- Cotton or Confetti (loose, in large quantities)

- Dry Moss or Leaves
- Flammable Powders or Liquids
- Hay or Straw (loose or baled)
- Paper Streamers (serpentine)
- Plastic Sheeting or Pellets
- Sawdust
- Tumbleweeds
- Wood Bark or Shavings

### Electric Lights:

- All lights must be tagged as having been UL (Underwriters Laboratories) listed and marked for indoor use. Check for frayed wires, loose connections and/or broken or cracked sockets; damaged sets should be discarded. All electrical décor must be unplugged at the end of the work day.
- Inspect each set of lights—new or old—for broken/cracked sockets, frayed/bare wires, and loose connections.
- Use no more than three sets of lights per extension cord.
- Do not overload electrical outlets (cube taps are prohibited).
- Protect the electrical wires from damage. Do not run wires under carpet, through doorways, or where they will be walked on. Do not use nails or tacks to hang wires. Properly secure and protect any wires that cross aisles. Wires are to not run across a corridor.
- To avoid potential fire hazards and the possibility of severe electrical shock, electric light strings should not be directly attached to metallic trees and/or decorations.
- Decorate the tree first, and plug in the lights last. Lamps/bulbs should not touch the tree or other decorations.
- Turn the lights off whenever the area is unattended and at the end of every work day.
- Extension cords must plug directly into a permanent outlet and may not be connected in series.
- All electrical devices and power cords need to be used only as approved and intended by the manufacturer and/or the Facilities Electricians.
- Use of power strips is prohibited unless the power strip has a built in circuit breaker.

All decorative displays, in public areas, must be inspected and approved in writing by the Campus Fire Marshal and the Facilities Management Department.