

General

The quickest and easiest way to ensure that appropriate guidelines and approvals are obtained for decorations or events is to start locally. Contact your department administration, House Manager, or student group advisors for information on what is required and where to begin to seek the required approvals for your event. Start the planning early to allow time to make adjustments or obtain city permits if required.

The following are some of the most common items to be considered for events within the residence halls.

1. Never block, hide, or disguise an exit.
2. Keep exits free and clear from combustibles and obstructions.
3. Decorations or furnishings must not constrict or obstruct corridors.
4. Never place combustibles in corridors, lobbies, or on corridor walls.
5. All exits should have illuminated exit signs.
6. Large amounts of plastics, Styrofoam, and polyurethane forms must not be used for decorations or furnishings in public assemblies, corridors, stairways, or lobbies. Limited amounts may be permissible.
7. Fabrics and other combustibles should not be hung from ceiling
8. Fabrics such as curtains, drapes, furniture coverings, floor coverings, must be fire retardant in public areas. A certificate of flame proofing is required
9. Exotic lighting or unusual visual effects utilizing lasers or other unusual optical devices must be approved for use by your House Manager.
10. Avoid the use of decorations with sharp edges or corners.
11. The use of flash pots, smudge pots, pyrophoric materials, or fire works, of any kind for recreation, art, or entertainment is strictly prohibited.
12. The use of existing conduit, cables, or piping to hang items or equipment is prohibited.
13. Gasoline, propane, or other internal combustion engines are not permitted in the buildings.
14. Temporary wiring such as extension cords and multiple outlet strips must be approved by your House Manager for safety use with lighting or sound equipment and lighted decorations.
15. Combustible materials should be kept at a safe distance or be shielded from sources of heat such as radiators or light bulbs.
16. Fire suppression equipment (strobes, sprinkler heads, smoke detectors, etc.) cannot be obstructed. Nothing is must be attached to, hung from or blocking these items.

For the Holidays

The following information will provide guidelines on how to conduct holiday functions and similar festive events safely and in accordance with city and state laws:

Holiday Trees, Wreaths, Boughs, Greenery, and Other Decorations

Types Permitted

- Artificial trees, wreaths, boughs, greenery, and other decorations labeled as flame retardant and that are UL listed or classified are permitted. Non-combustible decorations are also permitted. Artificial trees may be metallic or non-metallic.
- Natural trees (cut or alive), natural wreaths, boughs, or greenery are not permitted in Campus buildings or residence halls.
- Flammable decorations such as natural greens, straw, crepe paper, streamers, and surface coverings are prohibited. Flammable decorations are also prohibited in corridors, stairways, lobbies, and student residential rooms. The use of greeting cards, wrapping paper, and streamers to decorate exit corridor walls is prohibited.

Locations Permitted

- Artificial trees and related decorations permitted above are allowed in offices, enclosed lounges, student rooms and other non-public areas not excluded below.

Locations Not Permitted

- Artificial trees and related decorations are not permitted in lobbies, corridors, aisles, stairways, or passageways. They must not obstruct an exit or narrow a pathway to the exit. Trees are not permitted in public assembly areas or laboratories. Trees and related decorations are not allowed to obstruct the usual view of exit signs.

Electrical Decorations

Trees Lights

- Only UL approved lights rated for use on artificial trees are to be used. Larger tree lights normally used on natural trees generate enough heat to melt plastic and ignite decorations. Miniature or "twinkle" lights are preferred. Remote spotlights are recommended for use with metal trees to avoid an electrical shock hazard. The use of holiday lights, electric ornaments, and extension cords in corridors and over exit doors are prohibited.

Accessory Cords

- Extension cords for temporary use only for the holiday season should not be used in a way that will create a fire, tripping, or electrical hazard. The cords must be UL listed, be a minimum of 16 gauge wire (this excludes #18 lamp wire), and properly plugged into a wall outlet.

Open Flames and Heat Sources

- The use of candles or any type of open flames for lighting, or decorative purposes are prohibited. All decorations should be kept a safe distance or be shielded from sources of heat such as radiators, light bulbs, desk lamps, dryers, and heating appliances.

Fireplaces

- If prior approval has been given for their use, fireplaces should only be used according to the operating guidelines.