



Fire Marshal's Office

Department of Campus Safety

Decorations Policy

The following policy addresses the decoration of residence hall floors, doors, lobbies, and dwelling units, as well as offices, hallways, and vestibules throughout buildings on campus. Any decorations using an inordinate amount of combustible materials are prohibited without the consent of the OU Fire Marshal's Office. The list of prohibited materials is not exhaustive and may be revised at any time by the OU Fire Marshal's Office. In accordance with a memorandum of understanding with the State Fire Marshal's Office and the provisions of the 2015 International Fire Code, the OU Fire Marshal's Office reserves the right to allow or remove any type of decoration upon evaluation.

General Guidelines

1. Materials labeled as noncombustible, flame-resistant, or flame-retardant should be used. There is no restriction on non-combustible and non-flammable materials as long as it does not interfere with fire and life safety equipment and systems. It is possible to make a combustible material flame-resistant using commercial products or the flame proofing solution found in our list of policies. However, combustible materials shall still be limited.
2. Do not block or obscure exits, exit pathways, exit signs, and emergency lights.
3. Do not block, hang, or attach anything to a sprinkler head or fire alarm detection and notification devices.
4. Decorations on hallway walls shall not be more than 20% of the wall area. Decorations on doors shall not be more than 20% of the door.
5. Keep all materials away from any heat sources.

Candles and Open Flames

1. All candles are prohibited in every building on campus. The use of scented wax electric warming devices are permissible with the approval of an authorized manager and within the parameters of any department policy.
2. Outdoor open flames associated with an event such as candlelight ceremonies and cookouts are permissible after obtaining an Open Flame Permit from the OU Fire Marshal's Office and approval of the event by the OU Special Events Committee.

Prohibited Materials

1. Cedar Trees or Branches
2. Flammable Powders or Liquids
3. Sawdust
4. Wood Bark or Shavings
5. Hay or Straw/ Loose or Baled (Indoors)

Decorative Live and Artificial Vegetation

1. Live trees used indoors that are burlap-balled or potted are permissible but must be less than 6 feet tall. Live trees shall be watered as frequently as necessary to keep it from drying out, depending on the species. If trees or any other plants dry out, turn brown, or shed many leaves, they must be disposed of immediately and properly.
2. Cut trees are prohibited on campus due to their level of combustibility and the difficulty in maintaining general cleanliness. It is also difficult to maintain them in an acceptable condition; therefore, they are not a practical option for use on campus.
3. Artificial vegetation shall be listed and tested in an approved method for flame propagation rating. Since cut trees are prohibited, artificial trees for holiday decoration are permissible as long as it has a listed flame resistance and/or propagation rating based on an approved method for testing.

Means of Egress

1. Decorations or other objects shall not obstruct access to an exit, egress from an exit, or the visibility of an exit.
2. Hangings, draperies, and other decorations shall not be placed over exit doors or otherwise be located to conceal or obstruct an exit. An exit door must remain to look like an exit and not blend in with any other decorations or decorative scheme.
3. Mirrors shall not be placed on exit doors. Mirrors shall not be placed in or adjacent to any exit in such a manner as to confuse the direction of the exit.

Electric Lights

1. All electric lights used must be UL (Underwriters' Laboratories) listed with the UL tag still attached for use in a potential inspection. If the UL listing cannot be found on electric lights during an inspection, they will be removed at that time.
2. Each set of electric lights, new or old, should be inspected by the owner for broken/cracked sockets, frayed/exposed wires, and loose connections. Repair or discard any damaged set of lights.
3. Do not overload electrical outlets.
4. Do not run wires under carpet, through doorways, or anywhere they can be walked on causing the wires to be pinched and damaged. Do not use nails or tacks to hang wires.
5. Do not place electric lights on metallic trees. The only approved manner of illumination on metallic trees is the use of spotlights.
6. Turn lights off whenever the area is unattended.

Removal of Decorations

1. All decorations must be removed as soon as practical after the event for which they were used.
2. Indoor holiday decorations should be removed prior to closing for winter break.