



The Department of Fraternity & Sorority Life has issued the following guidelines for holiday decorations in and around all University-owned Chapter houses. By following these guidelines, your houses will remain safe over the holiday season. Please read through these carefully, so that you can prevent problems and violations before they happen, or are written up by university staff.

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.

Types Not Permitted

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 rooms.

Locations Permitted

Artificial trees and related decorations permitted above are allowed in all 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 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, LED 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. Extension cords for outside lights must be heavy duty cords expressly for outdoor use. Exterior lights must be plugged into the exterior socket on the front porch of each house. The outlet covers are not locked and can be opened using a key or other item open the cover.

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

Fireplaces are decorative and are not functional.

EXTERIOR DECORATIONS

Approved lights and decorations may not be attached to the doors, columns, windows, etc., using pins, nails, staples, or any other penetrating devices. Also, the use of duct tape or other adhesives that leave marks may not be used. Damage to these surfaces will result in a minimum charge of \$500.00. Removable tapes, painters tape, electrical tape, and other easily removable adhesives are recommended.

Window screens may not be removed from windows, and no objects can be hung out of windows or draped from window to window.

No one is allowed on the fire escapes, roofs or porticos under any circumstances, except in case of emergency.

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

GENERAL

The quickest and easiest way to ensure that appropriate guidelines and approvals are obtained for decorations or events is to start locally.

The following are some of the most common things to be considered within the chapter houses:

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 the Associate Director for Greek Facilities.
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 Director or Resident Fellow for safe 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

If you have any questions at all, please do not hesitate to call the office at (301) 314-7172. Have Happy (and creative!) Holidays!