OREGON FIRE CODE
Interpretations and Technical Advisories

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Date: November 16, 2026

Ruling: Technical Advisory No. 25-09 (Revised TA # 08-03, 11-11, 14-09, 19-09 & 22-09)

Subject: Holiday Décor and Fire Safety Guidelines

Code Reference: 2025 Oregon Fire Code (OFC), Section 806

Subject: Guidance on the use of decorative items during traditional holidays as well as any seasonal decorative arrangement.

Contents: For the purposes of this technical advisory the following shall apply:

MEANS OF EGRESS

- Access to exits and exit paths widths along the means of egress shall not be obstructed by decorative materials. See OFC Section 806.2 for specifics.

SOURCES OF IGNITION

- Candles and other sources of open flame are not allowed for any decorations or ceremonies, except as *approved* by the *fire code official* prior to the event.
- Sources of ignition shall not be allowed within the vicinity of combustible decorative materials. See OFC Section 806.3.

ELECTRICAL

- Only Nationally Recognized Testing Laboratories (NRTL's) such as Underwriters Laboratories (UL) *listed* miniature or LED style lights shall be used in accordance with their *listing*.
- Extension cords shall be *listed* and *labeled* by a NRTL in accordance with UL 817. Approved commercially manufactured *listed* cord assemblies (14-gauge minimum /15-amp minimum) shall be used. Only grounded or polarized extension cords shall be used.
- Electrical lights and extension cords that are physically damaged or altered shall not be used unless repairs are in accordance with the state adopted electrical code.

DECORATIVE MATERIALS

- Decorative materials are materials applied over interior finishes such as curtains, drapes, fabrics, streamers and other surface coverings, batting, cloth, cotton, hay, stalks, straw, vines, leaves, trees, moss, and similar items including foam plastics.

- Natural cut vegetation, including natural cut Christmas trees.
  Fire-retardant coatings are not required or recommended on natural cut trees and will not extend the length of time a tree should be permitted indoors. While freshly cut trees are naturally flame resistant due to their high-water content, they become extremely flammable when permitted to dry out. When brought indoors, the heat and lower humidity will accelerate the drying process.

  - Where fire-retardant treatments are applied to natural cut trees, the fire-retardant treatment shall be tested by an NRTL and comply as outlined in OFC Section 807.1

  Care of Christmas trees shall be as follows: (See OFC Section 806)

  - Sawed off at least one half (1/2) inch above the original cut.
  - Mounted securely in a tree stand, pail, tub, or other water-type holder or reservoir.
  - Maintain the water level above the cut as long as the tree is indoors and add fresh water daily.
  - Avoid placement near heating sources including fireplaces, air vents and space heaters which can accelerate the drying process and may also pose an ignition hazard.

  Decorations made of natural cut materials shall be removed at any indication of dryness, such as brittleness, loss of color, or fallen needles. Christmas trees and other natural cut holiday decorations should be removed if the building is unoccupied for more than three (3) days.

- Artificial decorations may have electrical devices used in accordance with manufacturer's instructions.

  Exception: Artificial decorations having exposed metal surfaces shall not be decorated with any type of electrical devices, decorations or appliances.

- All decorations shall be either inherently fire-retardant or treated with a flame-retardant to be flame-resistant and shall comply with OFC Section 807.

- The *means of egress* shall not be obstructed by decorative vegetation or materials.

OCCUPANCY SPECIFIC GUIDELINES

- Assemblies – Assembly buildings or rooms shall not exceed the posted occupancy load or as *approved* by the fire code authority.

- Schools – Artwork, decorations for learning purposes, and student generated materials on the walls in routes of egress shall not exceed 20% of the specific wall area they are attached, and in classrooms shall not exceed 50% of the specific wall area they are attached. See OFC Sections 807.5.2.2 & 807.5.2.3.

    - Displays for classrooms and hallways:
        - Paper materials such as artwork and decorations shall be secured flat against the wall or bulletin board.
            - Three-dimensional artwork and décor (that has height, width, and depth, or thickness) is prohibited unless *approved* by the local *fire code official*.
        - Limit displays to 40 square feet with a three-foot "fire break" between displays.
        - Displays shall not cover more that 20% of a hallway wall area.
        - Classroom doors shall not be covered with paper.
        - Materials suspended from the ceiling (hanging décor) shall be at least 24 inches below the ceiling and be at least 18 inches from fire sprinkler heads.
        - Items suspended cannot hang low enough to interfere with exiting.
        - Ceilings shall not be covered with flammable materials.

    - Three dimensional artwork located in routes of egress shall be limited in size (no greater than 40 square feet), shall not be continuous in nature, provided with a clear area around it that is equal to the size of the display, and be inherently fire resistant.

- Health Care, Residential Care and Assisted Living Facilities.

    - Natural cut Christmas trees are prohibited in health care, residential care and assisted living type occupancies.
      Exceptions:
      1) Trees located in areas protected by an approved automatic sprinkler system excluding patient rooms.
      2) Trees in patient rooms that meet one of the following:
          a) A live Christmas tree not exceeding 24 inches in height, including the pot. Pots shall not exceed 9 inches in diameter.
          b) An artificial tree of non-combustible material not exceeding 24 inches in height.
    - No electrical decorations are allowed on Christmas trees in patient rooms.
      Exception. Battery operated listed miniature or LED style lights may be used with the approval of the facility.
    - Decorative material shall not exceed more than 20% of corridor walls area.
    - Artificial decorative vegetation, e.g., artificial Christmas trees shall meet the flame propagation performance criteria of NFPA 701 and shall be documented and certified by the manufacturer in an approved manner.
    - Listed miniature or LED style lights may be used around the inner framing of an outside wall window with the approval of the facility.

- Foster Care Homes – Christmas trees shall not be in sleeping rooms.

- Contact the local fire authority for temporary membrane structures, tents, haunted houses, outdoor carnivals, fairs and other places of assembly.

- Contact local fire authority for fireworks displays. Contact the Oregon State Fire Marshal Regulatory Services Division for required permits.

- Jails, Detention and Correctional Facilities.

    - Natural cut Christmas trees shall be prohibited in jails, detention and correctional facilities.

      Exception: With approval of the *fire code official*, natural cut Christmas trees may be placed in common areas protected by an approved automatic sprinkler system.

Other References: 2012 NFPA 101