

# University of Massachusetts Amherst

## Residence Hall

### Seasonal Decoration Fire Safety

In order to assure the safety of all residents and visitors to our residence halls and comply with State Fire Prevention Regulations, anyone wishing to place seasonal decorations in public spaces must follow our Seasonal Decoration Fire Safety Program.

#### Apply for a permit

Permits are now required before any decorative material is placed within corridors, lobbies or lounges of residence halls. Permit applications are available from Residence Life staff. The permit will identify what and where decorative material is to be installed. Permit applications should be submitted to Environmental Health and Safety one week prior to installation.

#### Materials to Avoid

- Because of their combustible nature, the following material may not be used for decorating within residence halls. Corn stalks, leaves, hay, and trees. Other natural materials such as pumpkins, squash and gourds are permitted.
- Do not use plastic bags or plastic sheeting as plastic is combustible and produces toxic smoke when burned.
- Keep electrical cords and lights out of corridors

#### Materials To Use

##### Noncombustible Material

**or :**

- **Material that is certified flame retardant by its Manufacturer** (meeting NFPA 701 test requirements)

Paper, Crape paper and streamers used for decorations are ok if labeled as "fire-proof", "flame-proof, or non-flammable."

**Be sure to read the label before you buy the material.**

#### Preplan – Decorations must not :

- Block or cover emergency equipment, any part of the fire alarm system, sprinkler system, fire extinguishers, emergency lights, or exit lights.
- Completely cover regular corridor lighting.
- Block, hide, or impede exits
- Be placed in stairwells
- Be placed in elevators
- Create tripping or fall hazards

**Remember - Lighted Candles Within The Residence Halls are Not Permitted**

A pre-installation review will be conducted with the installer(s) at the location(s) of the intended display. Permits will be issued for compliant decorative display plans. EH&S will also inspect decorations or decorative display(s) after their installation.

For more information on fire safety, call Environmental Health & Safety at 545-2682

**University of Massachusetts Amherst  
Residence Hall  
Decoration Fire Safety Program**

**Purpose**

In our continual effort to assure the safety of all residents and visitors to our residence halls, the following fire safety guidelines and policies regarding the decorating of public spaces shall be utilized. These guidelines will also assist the University in meeting applicable State Fire Prevention Regulations.

**Flammable Decorative Materials**

In order to minimize fire potential and protect means of egress for all residence hall occupants, no flammable decorative material is permitted in any exit-way or public space. No decorations are permitted in stairwells or elevators. Only noncombustible or manufacturer certified flame retardant decorations (meeting NFPA 701 test requirements) are permitted in corridors, lobbies and lounges. Examples of prohibited flammable decorative materials include but are not limited to: plastic, cotton batting, straw, vines, leaves, trees, and hay. Approved manufacturer flame retardant material includes: streamers, cloth, and paper used for decorative effect.

**Permit To Place Decorative Material**

Any residence hall intending to place or hang special seasonal decorations in a public space shall apply for a permit from the Department of Environmental Health and Safety. This permit will identify the sponsor and installer, provide exact placement locations within the building, along with the type, extent, and duration of the decorative material. The permit will also provide certification that any special seasonal decorations are either noncombustible or have been treated and certified as flame retardant by the manufacturer.

Under no circumstances will the blocking of exits, stairways, doorways, exit signs, lighting, fire sprinkler systems, smoke detectors, fire alarm pull stations, or fire extinguishers be permitted. No decorations are permitted within stairwells or elevators. Electrical cords and electrical decorative lighting should not be placed in corridors or stairwells.

**Residence Life**

Permit applications will be available from Residence Life staff. Staff will be able to provide guidance on installation requirements, approved material, product information, and available distributors of flame retardant products.

**Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S)**

EH&S shall be mailed, faxed, or emailed completed permit applications at least one week prior to installation. EH&S Fire Prevention staff will review all permit applications. A pre-installation review will be conducted with the installer(s) at the location(s) of the intended display. Permits will be issued for compliant decorative display plans. EH&S will also inspect decorations or decorative display(s) after their installation. If decorative material is found to be non-compliant the permit will be revoked, the deficiencies will be reviewed with the Residence Director, and will subsequently require modification or removal by the sponsor/installer. EH&S conducts periodic safety inspections of all residence halls. Fire safety violations including those involving decorations are forwarded to the appropriate Residence Director, Residence Life staff member, or Housing Maintenance for corrective action.



**UNIVERSITY of  
MASSACHUSETTS  
AMHERST**

Environmental Health & Safety  
N414 Morrill Science Center  
Campus Safety and Fire Prevention Services  
Voice: 413-545-5114 Fax: 413-545-2600

**University of Massachusetts Amherst  
Residence Hall Decorative Display  
Permit Application**

**Residence Hall** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date of Application** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of Applicant** \_\_\_\_\_ **Applicant Phone Number** \_\_\_\_\_

**Applicant Address** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date of Display Placement** \_\_\_\_\_

**Location(s) of Decorative Displays**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Description of Display**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Material Types**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Noncombustible**

**Manufacturer Certified Fire Retardant Material (Tested to NFPA 701)**

**Decoration Guidelines Distributed**

**Residence Director Signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Applicant Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Permit Approval**

**Date of Approval** \_\_\_\_\_

**Environmental Health and Safety Review Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

**Special Restrictions**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**EH&S Pre-installation Review Date** \_\_\_\_\_ **EH&S Final Inspection Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Decorations / Display in Compliance**

**Decoration / Display Noncompliant**  **Permit Withheld**

**Reason(s) for withholding**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Inspector Signature** \_\_\_\_\_