



UNIVERSITY OF
NORTHERN COLORADO

Environmental Health and Safety

Holiday Safety Guidelines

October 2025



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Environmental Health and Safety

Holiday Safety Guidelines

I. Purpose

The following information provides fire safety guidelines for holiday decorations on campus. Your cooperation will help make this a safer holiday season for all.

II. Holiday Trees

Live trees are prohibited in all Residence Halls and large assembly areas (such as auditoriums, concert halls, gymnasiums, libraries, banquet halls, etc.). Live trees are allowed in other selected campus buildings. If allowed, the following guidelines must be followed:

- 1) Natural cut trees shall have the trunk bottoms cut off at least 0.5 inches above the original cut and placed in a support device.
- 2) Support devices shall:
 - Hold the tree securely, in the upright position, and on a level floor to avoid tipping.
 - Be capable of containing a minimum 2-day water supply
 - Water level, when full, shall cover the tree stem not less than 2 inches. The water level shall be maintained above the fresh cut and checked not less than once daily.
- 3) The tree shall be removed from the building whenever the needles begin falling off.

Trees shall be kept at a minimum distance equal to or greater than the height of the tree from heat vents, any open flames, or heat-producing devices.

Artificial decorative trees must be flame-resistant or flame-retardant.

The use of unlisted electrical wiring and lighting on natural cut trees and artificial decorative vegetation is prohibited. The use of electrical wiring and lighting on artificial trees constructed entirely of metal is prohibited. Electrical wiring and lighting shall have a UL marking.

III. Candles

Open flames (including candles and incense) are prohibited in residence halls and residents' rooms. Candles and open flames shall not be used on or near decorative vegetation.

Candles are permitted in non-residence halls but be mindful of campus fire safety policies and procedures that may require a permit.

IV. Electrical Lights

The use of miniature or LED lights is encouraged as they are more energy-efficient and remain cooler than other lights. Before using electrical lights and cords the following items should be reviewed:

- Check lights and cords for frays or cracks before use. Do not use damaged cords.
- Do not piggy-back extension cords and power strips
- Do not exceed the power capacities of outlets
- Do not run cords under the carpet, through ceiling tiles, or doorways
- Do not hang cords from fire sprinkler heads or pipes

V. Garlands and Displays

Keep the use of garlands and displays to a minimum. Garlands or displays should not extend down hallways, nor shall they be placed across a threshold, as this may obstruct fire sprinkler heads, and other fire safety systems and could affect means of egress.