

Environmental Health & Safety

Medical Center and Patient Care Areas

Holiday and Seasonal Decorations Display Guidelines

Adorning your work space with a bit of seasonal cheer can be a fun way to enjoy the spirit of the holiday season with clients and co-workers alike, but it's important to consider certain safety precautions when doing so. This guide will walk you through what decorations are okay to use and where and how you may display them.

If you have any specific questions after reviewing these guidelines, please contact the University Fire Marshal's Office at 275-3243.

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What Locations Are Included?

The following locations are included in these guidelines as part of the University of Rochester Medical Center and patient care areas

- School of Medicine and Dentistry
- Research Buildings (KMRB, Del Monte Institute, Saunders Research Institute)
- Eastman Dental Center
- Helen Wood Hall
- Ambulatory Care Facility
- Wilmot Cancer Center
- Golisano Children's Hospital at Strong
- Strong West
- Sawgrass Surgical Center
- Strong Memorial Hospital including the Emergency Building and Behavioral Health
- The 3000 building (Eye Institute) and 5000 building

What are the do's and don'ts of lighting, trees and other decorations?

Lighting

Types of Lights

On electric lights, look for the label to see if they are identified for indoor use and bear the **Underwriters' Laboratories (UL) or Factory Mutual (FM)** marks.

Candles and any other open flames are prohibited. Opt for an electric candle instead.



Power Sources

When plugging in lighting, choose only the **gray or brown electrical outlets**, as they are not on emergency power circuit.

Connect **no more than three sets** of lights together. Check carefully to ensure that there are no loose sockets or damaged wires.

Plugging the lights directly into the power source is best, but you can use **a single power strip** if necessary. Make sure that it is **UL 1363 listed and surge protected**. Avoid cube taps and flexible/twisty power strips and refrain from “piggybacking” with multiple power strips plugged in to each other.

Don't use an extension cord.

Safe Habits

When choosing where to hang your lights, **do not place them in corridors or over exit doors** and make sure no wiring is strung through doors or ceilings or under carpeting.

Use electrical tape or cup-type hooks instead of staples, tacks, napes or paper tape.

Light strands can generate enough heat to ignite paper or cardboard, so ensure that the lights do not come into contact with paper, packages, cloth or other combustible items.

Turn off all holiday lights before leaving the area and at the end of the workday.

Trees and Other Decorations

When decorating with greenery, decorate only with artificial trees, wreaths, garland, boughs, etc. that are labeled as fire resistant or flame retardant and that are UL listed.

Natural trees—cut or alive—have a higher potential for catching fire and for fire to spread rapidly. They are not to be used except in instances approved by the Fire Marshal.

Avoid other combustible materials as well including paper wrapping, hay or straw, bamboo, dry moss, wood shavings, dry leaves, corn stalks and corn shucks, saw dust, tumbleweed, flammable powders or liquids, plastic sheeting, pallets, cotton batting, flock, paper streamers or confetti in large quantities.

Limited spray snow is allowed.

How and where in the workplace is it okay to decorate?

Many features of our workspaces are designed to keep us safe including exit doors, exit signs, fire and smoke doors, sprinklers, smoke detectors, fire extinguishers, pull stations, emergency lights and life safety equipment. Let these features serve their purpose—do not hang any decorations from them or allow any decorations to obstruct them.

Keep decorations out of corridors, aisles, and stairways and off of windows and door vision panels as well. These need to be kept clear to allow safe movement and clear visibility throughout our facilities.