



Safety Talk: Holiday Decorations



Every year,
candles cause
more than
10,000 home fires.
5,000 are in December.

Holiday decorations add a joyous and festive mood to the holiday season, but when holiday decorations are not used properly they can turn from festive to fiery in a split second.



Holiday Decorating Safety Tips:

- Use only artificial decorations that are flame retardant or non-combustible within University of Chicago buildings.
- Do not place decorations in areas where it will obstruct or hinder persons exiting the area in the event of an emergency.
- Do not use candles in University buildings, except for Rockefeller Chapel and Bond Chapel.
- All lighted decorations and extension cords shall bear the UL (Underwriters Laboratory) label. Make sure to follow all directions on lighting package and do not overload electrical outlets.
- Inspect all lights, light cords and extension cords before using and replace any frayed or damaged cords and/or worn sets of lights or those with loose connections.
- Always unplug lights before leaving an area or going home.
- Keep all decorations and displays away from ignition sources such as electrical panels, heating services or anything that may produce an open flame or high heat.
- Maintain an 18" clearance between sprinkler heads and decorations.
- No decorations may be attached or hung from sprinkler heads, sprinkler system piping, smoke detectors or heat detectors.
- Decorations cannot obstruct access to or visibility of exits, exit signs, fire alarm pull stations, alarm panels or fire extinguishers.
- Decorations cannot cover greater than five percent of a wall area or one article cannot cover greater than three percent of a wall area.
- Decorations must be affixed or mounted in such a way as to prevent damage to doors, ceilings, walls or floors.



Environmental Health and Safety would like everyone to follow a few safety tips when decorating the work place to avoid a tragic holiday and keep everyone safe.