



WASHINGTON STATE PATROL – FIRE PROTECTION BUREAU  
INSPECTION SECTION

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## Holiday Decorations in Nursing Homes and Hospitals

Decorations commonly displayed during the holiday season or as wall decorations may not be suitable for use in a Licensed Care Facility.

**Decorations and Finishes** – NFPA 101, Life Safety Code, Section 19.7.5.4 “Combustible decorations shall be prohibited in any health care occupancy unless they are flame retardant.”

**Prohibited decorations include:** NFPA 101 Section 19.7.5.4.

- Natural cut Christmas trees. International Fire Code (IFC) 806.1.1.
- Fresh cut evergreen boughs for decoration.
- Paper tree ornaments.
- Trees, plants, displays, hangings, and other decorations must not block exits, visibility of exits, or fire protection appliances. NFPA 101 Section 7.1.10.2, IFC 806.3.
- Burning candles. NFPA 101 Section 13.7.2, IFC 308.1.5.
- Never hang decorations from fire sprinkler heads or pipes. NFPA 25, 2-2.2 (1998 Edition).

**Decorations that are allowed include:**

- Artificial Christmas trees that comply with the International Fire Code. IFC 806.2.
- Decorations that are non-combustible or flame retardant. IFC 807.1; IFC 807.2.
- Decorations, such as bows and paper cut-outs that are flame resistant. IFC 807.2.
- Decorative lighting that is approved by a testing laboratory such as UL, used only in supervised areas and turned off when not in use. IFC 806.5.

**Other fire prevention measures:**

### Resident Rooms

- Rooms should be neat and orderly.
- All items must be 36” from heaters. Watch for blankets and other cloth material too close to heaters. IFC 305.1; IFC 603.5.1.
- Do not accumulate combustible materials, i.e. newspapers, laundry or clothing. IFC 304.1; IFC 304.2.
- Extension cords are prohibited, except when used on a portable appliance, such as a vacuum cleaner. NFPA 70 400.8; IFC 605.4.
- In nursing homes, portable heaters are prohibited. NFPA 101 Section 19.7.8, IFC 605.10.

**Outside:**

Electrical decorations and lighting shall be UL approved.

**Resources for Licensed Care Facilities** - [http://www.wsp.wa.gov/fire/insp\\_resources.htm](http://www.wsp.wa.gov/fire/insp_resources.htm).