



**STATE OF IOWA
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY**

STATE FIRE MARSHAL DIVISION

Holiday Decorating Requirements
(Health Care Facilities)

Trees, Wreaths, & Branches

1. Natural trees, natural wreaths, and fresh cut pine branches are not permitted in facilities in which the Iowa State Fire Marshal's Office is responsible for inspecting.

Decoration Requirements

2. Decorations in health care facilities must meet the requirements of *National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Standard 101 Life Safety Code*, 2012 edition, 18.7.5.6/19.7.5.6:

Combustible decorations shall be prohibited in any health care occupancy, unless one of the following criteria is met:

- (1) They are flame-retardant or are treated with approved fire-retardant coating that is listed and labeled for application to the material to which it is applied.
- (2) The decorations meet the requirements of NFPA 701, *Standard Methods of Fire Tests for Flame Propagation of Textiles and Films*.
- (3) The decorations exhibit a heat release rate not exceeding 100 kW when tested in accordance with NFPA 289, *Standard Method of Fire Test for Individual Fuel Packages*, using the 20 kW ignition source.
- (5)*They are decorations, such as photographs and paintings, in such limited quantities that a hazard of fire development or spread is not present.

Wall, Ceiling, & Door Decorations

3. Corridor doors shall not be covered with wrapping paper or any other combustible material and must meet the requirements of NFPA 101, 2012 edition, 18.7.5.6/19.7.5.6:
 - (4)*The decorations, such as photographs, paintings, and other art, are attached directly to the walls, ceiling, and non-fire-rated doors in accordance with the following:
 - (a) Decorations on non-fire-rated doors do not interfere with the operation or any required latching of the door and do not exceed the area limitations of 19.7.5.6(b), (c), or (d).
 - (b) Decorations do not exceed 20 percent of the wall, ceiling, and door areas inside any room or space of a smoke compartment that is not protected throughout by an approved automatic sprinkler system in accordance with Section 9.7.
 - (c) Decorations do not exceed 30 percent of the wall, ceiling, and door areas inside any room or space of a smoke compartment that is protected throughout by an approved supervised automatic sprinkler system in accordance with Section 9.7.
 - (d) Decorations do not exceed 50 percent of the wall, ceiling, and door areas inside patient sleeping rooms, having a capacity not exceeding four persons, in a smoke compartment that is protected throughout by an approved, supervised automatic sprinkler system in accordance with Section 9.7.
- A.19.7.5.6(4) The percentage of decorations should be measured against the area of any wall or ceiling, not the aggregate total of walls, ceilings, and doors. The door is considered part of the wall. The decorations must be located such that they do not interfere with the operation of any door, sprinkler, smoke detector, or any other life safety equipment. Other art might include hanging objects or three-dimensional items.
4. Artificial wreaths meeting the above criteria may be hung on corridor doors by brackets or hooks as long as the door can close and positive latch into the door frame. The brackets/hooks shall be the hanging or adhesive type and not nailed or screwed to the doors.
5. Decorations shall not be affixed or hung on required fire doors.

Christmas Lights

6. Low voltage (small bulb), UL-listed Christmas lights may be used in health care facilities. Large bulb lights often get very hot and shall not be used.
7. The lights shall be used in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications. Facilities should retain the guidelines for the type of lights they are using, follow that guidance, and maintain the documentation for review at the request of a surveyor. This includes for the maximum number of strands that may be strung together.

8. Christmas lights in resident rooms shall be plugged directly into an electrical outlet.
9. If absolutely necessary, Christmas lights may be plugged into extension cords on a temporary basis as long as the extension cords meet the following criteria:
 - ✓ The extension cord shall be a minimum of 12 gauge wire.
 - ✓ The extension cord shall be equipped with a 3-prong, grounded plug.
 - ✓ Extension cords (if located inside the building) shall be unplugged during the night hours while residents are sleeping.

“Piggybacking” of extension cords is prohibited. (Piggybacking is the practice of plugging one extension cord into another.)

General Requirements

10. Each facility shall keep combustible decorations to a minimum. Please remember the following during the holiday season:
 - ✓ Nothing shall be hung from or attached to sprinkler heads or piping, emergency lighting units, and fire alarm detectors.
 - ✓ Maintain the required sprinkler head clearances (18 inches from sprinkler deflector) and ensure decorations do not obstruct sprinkler discharge patterns.
 - ✓ Be careful to not visually obstruct a person’s view of fire alarm pull stations, exit signs, emergency lighting, and fire extinguishers.
 - ✓ Ensure decorations do not block required means of egress, corridor widths, and headroom.

Discretion will be used by each fire inspector to keep decorations at a minimum and at safe levels.