SOUTH KING FIRE
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CHRISTMAS TREES & DECORATIONS IN PUBLIC BUILDINGS

FIRE PREVENTION GUIDELINES

SCOPE AND PURPOSE

The use of natural or resin-bearing cut trees or boughs in public buildings shall be in accordance with this guideline.

CODE AUTHORITY

International Fire Code.

SPECIAL PROVISIONS

1. Natural cut trees, *where allowed by the Fire Code*, are recommended to be flame-proofed. Living trees (uncut) and artificial trees are allowed and do not require any fire retardant coatings. Since trees are not absorbent, the only effective type of treatment is the coating method. It is essential to get a sufficient amount of effective flame retardant chemical onto the surface of the tree. It is desirable to treat the tree and decorations to prevent the rapid spread of fire in a building. Flame retardant products can be found at local nurseries, paint or hardware stores.
2. Trees shall bear a tag stating date of placement in the public building, type of flame-retardant treatment used, name of the person who applied the flame-retardant, the name of the person affixing the tag, and the name of the person responsible for making daily tests.
3. The support device that holds a tree in an upright position shall be of a type that is stable and that:
   a. Does not damage or require removal of the tree stem base,
   b. Holds the tree securely and is of adequate size to avoid tipping over of the tree, and
   c. Is capable of containing a two-day minimum supply of water; covering the stem at least two (2) inches, and the quantity of water as follows:

      Trees up to 6 feet high - 1½ gallons of water
      Trees 6 to 8 feet high - 2 gallons of water
      Trees over 8 feet high - 3 gallons of water
4. Prior to setting up a tree, the trunk shall have a fresh butt cut at least one-half (½) inch above the original cut.
5. Hot tap water shall be used when first filling a support stand. After the first watering, cold tap water is best to ensure the tree continues to absorb water. The water level, when filled, shall be at least two (2) inches above the butt of the tree. The water level shall not be lower than the butt of the tree. If the water level should become lower than the butt of the tree, the tree shall be removed immediately or recut as described above.
6. Trees shall be checked daily for dryness by the following method: stand in front of a branch, grasp it with reasonably firm pressure and pull your hand toward you, allowing the branch to slip through your grasp. If the needles fall off readily, the tree does not have adequate moisture content, and it shall be removed immediately.
7. Candles and open flames shall not be used on or near a tree within a distance equal to the height of the tree.
8. Electrical decorations used on trees shall be UL or FM approved.
9. Trees shall be tested daily by a designated individual. The test shall include a check for dryness in accordance with #6 above, and adequate water maintained in accordance with #3 above.
10. Keep the trees and decorations away from sources of heat such as radiators, stoves or fireplaces. ***Do not block exits***.
11. ***TURN OFF*** all tree and other holiday lighting before leaving the building.
12. In schools and businesses, trees and decorations must be removed from the premises prior to closing for the holidays.
13. For outdoor lighting, use sets approved for outdoor use.