

**TO:** All Ithaca College Student Residents  
**FROM:** Environmental Health & Safety, Office of Public Safety  
**DATE:** December 5, 2008  
**RE:** **Holiday Season Fire Safety Policies**

### NATURAL TREES

- ❖ Natural trees may only be installed in main lobby areas of academic or office buildings. Only artificial trees may be used in other areas.
- ❖ Natural trees must be supported in a commercial tree stand. Homemade stands are not permitted since most of them do not provide a way to water the tree.
- ❖ Natural trees absorb a lot of water. The water in tree stands must be kept full until the tree is disposed of. Check the water level *daily* and add water as needed.
- ❖ Trees must be kept away from all heat sources such as, radiators, lamps, stoves, appliances, etc.
- ❖ Do not locate a tree where if upright or fallen, it will block emergency escape routes such as, corridors, stairs, or exit doors.
- ❖ Do not rely on chemical coatings or solutions to flameproof a natural tree. These materials are not completely effective.
- ❖ Keep the tree in the building for the shortest possible time. The tree must be removed when signs of drying are observed.

**VERY IMPORTANT:**



**NATURAL TREES IN ALL BUILDINGS MUST BE REMOVED BEFORE THE OCCUPANTS LEAVE FOR WINTER BREAK.**

### ARTIFICIAL TREES

- ❖ Artificial trees also need care in selection and use. Plastic and metallic trees can burn.
- ❖ Use an artificial tree that is clearly marked as being flame-retardant or made of slow-burning materials.
- ❖ Artificial trees with built-in electrical systems (e.g., lights) should have the Underwriters' Laboratory (UL) label.
- ❖ Although metal trees are not a fire hazard, they may become a shock hazard if faulty lighting strings are placed directly on them. Inspect lighting carefully before use.

### DECORATIONS

- ❖ Always use noncombustible decorating materials (e.g., metal, glass, etc.). Untreated cotton batting, flock, and paper ignite easily and will burn intensely. These products may be used for one-time-only special events (with prior approval of Environmental Health & Safety). There are several products that have the UL fire resistive label on the market.
- ❖ Fresh-cut evergreen boughs may be used for table decorations at one-time-only special events.
- ❖ Evergreen boughs cannot be attached to interior or exterior doors, stairways, hallways, handrails, etc.
- ❖ Hanging of crepe paper streamers and large paper decorations, such as posters and door coverings, from ceilings, doors, and doorframes is prohibited in all buildings. Reasonable quantities of these items bearing the UL fire resistive label may be used in non-residential buildings for a limited duration with prior approval from Environmental Health & Safety.



## LIGHTING

- ❖ Reasonable amounts of electric lighting are allowed on trees and for decoration in public areas only. All lighting must be turned off when the occupants leave the area.
- ❖ A single string of up to 50 lights or two electric candles will be allowed around or in windows subject to the following conditions:
  - The lights must carry the UL label and be in good operating condition. Lighting with broken sockets or frayed/damaged electric cords cannot be used.
  - Lights should be directly plugged to a wall outlet whenever possible.
    - A single, grounded (3-pronged) power-strip with surge protector may be used to connect the lights directly to a wall outlet.
    - Extension cords are prohibited.
- ❖ Multi-plug adapters on wall outlets are not permitted.
- ❖ Environmental Health & Safety reserves the right to inspect any and all lighting and electrical cords for safety. Lighting determined to be unsafe shall be removed.



## CANDLES

- ❖ Burning candles are not permitted under any circumstances in any buildings, unless approved in advance by Environmental Health & Safety (see below).
- ❖ Lit candles are not permitted as tree decorations.
- ❖ Candles can be lit in designated areas only, not in residential rooms or academic offices.



- One lounge in various residential building has been designated for use by students who wish to light Hanukkah candles. Please contact your Residence Director for information about the designated location in your building.
- ❖ Candles are only permitted for ceremonial purposes. Individuals or groups must obtain authorization from their Residence Director in advance of the time, date, and location of any candle-lighting ceremonies. Candles must be attended at all times by the people lighting them.

## ADDITIONAL SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

- ❖ Seasonal lighting, candles, and decorations are for *temporary* use only and must be removed immediately after the holidays.
- ❖ Know the location of the nearest fire alarm pull station, fire extinguisher, telephone, or red emergency phone.
- ❖ In case of fire, activate the nearest pull station, leave the building, and call the Office of Public Safety immediately at **911** and follow the evacuation procedure for your building.
- ❖ Know the escape route(s) from any area that you might be in.
- ❖ There are products on the market that may say "Tested to Underwriters' Standards" or, "Meets Underwriters' Standards." This is not the same as the Underwriters' seal or label.
- ❖ Any QUESTIONS concerning the use of holiday decorations or fire regulations may be directed to Tim Ryan, Manager of Environmental Health and Safety, Office of Public Safety, 274-3353.

**HAVE A SAFE HOLIDAY SEASON!**