

## **Ithaca College Holiday Season Fire Safety Policies**

### **NATURAL TREES**

- ❖ Natural trees may be installed only 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.
- ❖ The trees must be kept away from all heat sources such as radiators, lamps, stoves, and appliances.
- ❖ 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 (such as metal or glass). 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 from the Office of Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S). There are several products on the market that have the UL fire-resistive label.
- ❖ 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 from ceilings, doors, and door frames, is prohibited in all buildings. Reasonable quantities of these items bearing the UL fire-resistive label may be used in nonresidential buildings for a limited duration with prior approval from EH&S.

## LIGHTING

- ❖ Reasonable amounts of decorative 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. They are subject to the following conditions:
  - The lights must carry the UL label and be in good operating condition. Lighting with broken sockets or frayed or damaged electric cords cannot be used.
  - Lights should be plugged directly into a wall outlet whenever possible.
    - A single, grounded (three-pronged) extension cord or power strip may be used to connect the lights directly to a wall outlet.
    - Extension cords must have the UL label, be in good condition, and be less than 6 feet long.
    - The UL label must be in good condition and be attached to the lighting cord and extension cord.
- ❖ Multiplug adapters on wall outlets are not permitted.
- ❖ EH&S reserves the right to inspect any and all lighting and extension cords for safety. Lighting determined to be unsafe will be removed.

## CANDLES

- ❖ Burning candles are not permitted under any circumstances in any buildings unless approved in advance by EH&S (see next item).
- ❖ Candles can be lit in *designated areas only*, not in residential rooms or academic offices.
  - Candles are permitted only for ceremonial purposes. Individuals or groups must obtain authorization from EH&S 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.
- ❖ Lit candles are not permitted as tree decorations.

## ADDITIONAL SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

- ❖ Seasonal lighting, candles, decorations, and extension cords 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, call the Office of Public Safety immediately at **911**, and follow the evacuation procedure for your building.
- ❖ Know the escape routes 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' Laboratory seal or label.
- ❖ Any questions concerning the use of holiday decorations or fire regulations may be directed to Ron Clark, fire and building safety coordinator for EH&S, Office of Public Safety, 274-3086.