



DIVISION OF LICENSURE & ACCREDITATION

LICENSURE & SAFETY: Health Protection | Licensure & Certification | Medical Cannabis
ACCREDITATION & REPORTING: Vital Records | Health Data & Reporting
Accreditation & Quality | Legal

TO: Administrators
FROM: Medical Facilities Engineers
DATE: November 29, 2022
RE: **Holiday Decorations in Health Care Facilities**

As the holiday season approaches, the Office of Health Facilities Licensure and Certification receives several inquiries regarding the use of Christmas trees and décor. The Life Safety Code (Section 19.7.5.6) considers Christmas trees to be a highly flammable decoration. The South Dakota Department of Health, Office of Health Facilities Licensure and Certification, will allow the use of live trees and décor in health care facilities with the following precautions:

- Live trees must be flocked with a fire retardant.
- A staff person must be designated to water the tree.
- Trees should be limited to one per building.
- Live trees may be in the building only between the dates of **December 9, 2022, and January 1, 2023.**
- The tree must be located in a room that can be closed off from corridors, e.g., a dining room or lounge, and closely supervised by staff.
- The tree should be located near sprinkler heads or smoke detectors, if possible.
- No lights are allowed on flocked or metal trees. If lighting is desired, indirect flood lights may be used. Lights may be used on UL listed plastic trees in accordance with manufacturer's directions. Lights on trees should be unplugged at night. All lights used on trees must be UL listed.
- The use of small trees with fiber optic lights is acceptable but check for a UL listing mark on the device.
- Lights may be installed on the exterior of the building and on outside trees and shrubs. Exterior lighting circuits must have ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) protection.
- Wrapping paper and plastic film is very combustible and must not be used to decorate doors and wall surfaces.
- The use of live greens, including wreaths made from live greens, for decoration inside the building is prohibited.

We wish you a safe and happy holiday season. Should you have any questions regarding the above information, please contact the Office of Health Care Facilities Licensure and Certification at (605) 367-5434 or email james.bailey@state.sd.us.

Sincerely,

Cassie Deffenbaugh, Administrator
Office of Health Care Facilities Licensure and Certification