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TO: Building Coordinators  
FROM: Peter C. Ashbrook, Director  
DATE: November 21, 2007  
SUBJECT: Christmas Trees and Holiday Decorations in University Buildings, Residence Halls, and Family Student Housing

This is to remind you of the attached safety procedures for use of Christmas trees and holiday decorations in University facilities. All natural trees and evergreen decorations must be sprayed with a fire retardant material.

If you desire a live tree, EHS recommends purchasing it from the MU Forestry Club, which sprays the trees with a fire retardant and tags them at no additional cost. I have been told that sales will occur from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Thursday, November 29<sup>th</sup> through Sunday, December 2<sup>nd</sup> at the northeast corner of Memorial Stadium. It is my understanding that the Forestry Club can even arrange for free delivery to campus locations. Due to lack of demand in recent years, Landscape Services will no longer be providing services to spray live trees. However, if you purchase a live tree from another source, the Forestry Club will spray and tag your tree for a nominal fee of \$5.00 during the period they offer trees for sale.

Department trees and decorations may be put up no earlier than December 3, and must be removed from the site by the first working day following New Year's Day (Jan. 2). Please remember that the danger of fire increases each day the tree is up. All trees and decorations in residence halls and family student housing should be disposed of before the Christmas vacation begins (Dec. 14) except for the units which will be occupied. If trees and/or boughs become dry before these dates they must be removed prior. Electrical cords for lights should not be run through or under a door, especially a metal door. Such practice can lead to electrocution or a fire. If you have any questions concerning this information, please call David Dorth or Dennis Elmore at Environmental Health & Safety, 882-7018.

Please distribute this information—including the attachment—to the appropriate persons in your department/building.

Attachment

cc: Jackie Jones  
Charles Paxton  
Lloyd Shackelford  
Carol Twenter  
Carol Foley  
Hank Stelzer

**SAFETY PROCEDURES FOR THE USE OF  
CHRISTMAS TREES AND DECORATIONS IN UNIVERSITY  
BUILDINGS, RESIDENCE HALLS, AND FAMILY STUDENT HOUSING UNITS**

1. Be sure the tree and/or boughs are not dried out when you get them. Grasp a branch about 6” from the end and firmly slide it between your fingers to the tip. If the tree is fresh, no needles will come off. No red cedar trees or red cedar boughs are to be used under any circumstances due to their fast drying nature.
2. After purchasing a tree, keep it in water and outside the facility until the time you set it up (no earlier than December 1).
3. All natural trees and evergreen boughs set up in University facilities are to be sprayed with a fire retardant material (this does not apply to “U.L. Listed” artificial trees labeled as “Fire Resistant”).
4. When you are ready to set up the tree, saw approximately two inches off the bottom of the trunk to assist in absorption of water.
5. Be sure the tree is placed in a sturdy, broad-based stand which will hold water and be sure to keep water in the stand at all times. Check water level daily.
6. The tree must not be placed near a stairway, radiator, exit, hallway, or any other location where the tree, if standing or fallen, would block an escape route, signage or increase fire risk.
7. Electrical wiring should be inspected for frayed cords, loose connections, broken sockets, exposed wires and general safety prior to putting lighting on the tree. They must also be U.L. approved. Follow manufacturer’s guidelines for number of lights on any one circuit. Do not use real candles or other open flames on Christmas trees or as decorations in general.
8. Never leave Christmas tree lights on unless someone is in the area where the tree is located or the tree is visible to someone at all times.
9. Electrical tree lights are not to be used on metallic trees due to the ever present danger of electrocution.
10. Avoid use of electrical extension cords if possible and never use them for periods exceeding 30 days.
11. If you own or plan on purchasing an artificial holiday tree check to make sure it is marked “U.L. Listed” and labeled “Fire Resistant”.
12. There will be no designated drop-off/pickup location on campus property. The City of Columbia provides two mulch sites and suggests that Christmas trees be dropped off at one of them. These sites are at Capen Park (south of Stadium, off Rock Quarry Road, behind the Surplus Property Building) and Parkside mulch site (north of Memorial Park Cemetery, off Creasy Springs Road). All ornaments, icicles, tinsel, stands, bags, etc., must be removed from the trees. The trees are ground and used as wildlife cover, mulch, fish habitat, and soil conservation.
13. Do not put trees in dumpsters or outside on the curb, in the yard, or other locations.

Contact Environmental Health and Safety (2-7018) for more information.