Holidays 2001

Holiday Decorating Guidelines For UCSD

Decorating the workplace adds to the joy of the approaching holiday season. Every year, across the nation, fire and electrical accidents increase during the December holiday season.

The UCSD Fire Marshal reminds us that, regardless of their combustibility, no decorative materials are permitted in exit corridors, nor placed in such a manner as to obstruct view of exit signs, fire alarm pull stations, fire extinguishers, sprinkler heads or hose cabinets. Best locations: reception areas, lobbies, foyers, and break rooms. Think Safety when you decorate.

Lighting Up the Holidays

- Open flames and candles may not be used as decorations in the workplace.
- For office decorating use indirect lighting for your decorations whenever possible. Electric lights should not be used on metallic trees. If individual tree lights are to be used, whether they are family heirlooms or new out of the box, examine them carefully for broken or frayed wires or loose connections. If you find any of these conditions, do not attempt to repair it. Discard the lights immediately. The cost of new equipment is small compared to the increased risk of fire from damaged (even if repaired) wiring.
- Use of extension cords is discouraged; but if they are used—with the understanding that they are for temporary use only—make sure they are in good condition and UL-listed. The extension cord wire should be equal to or larger than the wire you plug into it. If in doubt, use a heavy-duty cord. Never tack or staple an extension cord to the wall or woodwork—it could damage the cord and present a fire hazard. Make sure cords do not create trip hazards.

Greenery in the Scenery

All decorative materials (including, but not limited to trees, tree cuttings, hay, straw, curtains, drapes, hangings, etc.) must be either noncombustible (not all artificial trees are!), inherently flame retardant (the label will say so), or have been treated with a flame retardant solution by a licensed treatment vendor.

Natural Christmas Trees

- When selecting a natural tree, one freshness test is to lift the cut tree a couple of inches off the ground and bring it down abruptly on the stump end. The outer needles should not fall off in substantial numbers. Inner needles do turn brown and shed naturally each year. Securely mount the tree in a stand with a water reservoir. Add fresh water daily. Consumer-applied flame-retardant coatings will NOT extend the length of time a tree should be permitted indoors.
- Natural trees may be decorated with electrical lights. Use only UL-listed miniature lights in perfect condition.
- Remove the tree from the building prior to any extended period of vacancy. Remove the tree immediately upon any indication of dryness (e.g., brittleness, loss of color, falling needles, etc.). While freshly-cut trees have a certain degree of natural flame-resistance due to their high moisture content, they become extremely flammable in a very short time when brought inside and permitted to dry out. The heat and lower humidity inside buildings accelerate the drying process.

Artificial Greenery

- Choose artificial greenery made of fire retardant materials for office decorating.
- If nonmetallic, artificial trees may be decorated with electrical lights. Use only UL-listed miniature lights in perfect condition and UL-listed heavy-duty extension cords with a built-in over-current protection device (circuit breaker), also in perfect condition.
- Never use electrical decorations or devices on metallic trees.

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Please Post or Circulate

Poinsettias Are Not Poisonous
If decorating with live plants or greenery, be aware of which plants are poisonous and should be kept out of the reach of curious children and pets. The San Diego Division of the California Poison Control System web page (http://health.ucsd.edu/poison/) provides a list of both poisonous and non-poisonous plants...and guess what? Poinsettias are NOT poisonous as is commonly believed by many people.

Some of our other holiday plants are on the poisonous plant page: Mistletoe, Boston and English Ivy, and Holly berries are among them. Holly shipped for decorating purposes often has the berries removed, sometimes being replaced with artificial berries.

If accidental ingestion of a poisonous plant does occur, contact the CPCS at (800) 876-4766. For hearing impaired: (800) 972-3323.

Keeping Your Holiday Cool
• At work, save your easiest, least-pressured tasks for the end of the day (return phone calls, read professional literature, preview tomorrow’s schedule, tidy your work area). This allows you to unwind and leave work behind when you go home.

• Stretch to relax...Take a deep breath and stretch, creating hand, arm, and chest tension. Then exhale, releasing the tension. Breathe normally on the next inhalation. Repeat until lingering tension is gone. A stress-relief breathing technique: rapidly blow out all the air in your lungs; then slowly breathe in through your nose. Repeat six times.

• In a holiday slump? Make time to exercise. After exercise, you’ll feel better and feel better about yourself!

Your New Year Resolutions?
• Diet Incentive: Carry around a 10- or 20-pound weight for a day to see the impact that it has on your body. Most people regularly carry around at least that much in excess fat.

• “It’s easy to quit smoking,” said Mark Twain. “I’ve done it dozens of times.” Try again. On the day you quit, think of something you’d like to buy and estimate its cost in terms of packs of cigarettes. Put aside the money to buy it. Or, decide in the morning how many cigarettes you’ll smoke that day. For every cigarette over your quota, give a dollar to your favorite charity.

Safety Training Programs

EH&S Safety Training Days
1st & 3rd week of every month.

See the schedule at http://www-ehs.ucsd.edu/training/train_sched.htm

An extensive array of safety training classes are offered:

Injury & Illness Prevention Program (IIPP)
Radiation, Biosafety, Chemical Safety
Hazardous Waste Management
Risk Management/Workers’ Compensation
How to Maintain a Healthy Back
Office and Laboratory Ergonomics
Skin Protection/Sun Sense

Injury & Illness Prevention Program
http://www-ehs.ucsd.edu/iipp/iipp.htm

Register for IIPP courses by e-mailing Betty Thomas at bthomas@ucsd.edu

All IIPP classes are 8:30-9:30 AM.
Wed, February 6 ...... Price Center, Gallery B
Thur, February 21 ...... Price Center, Gallery B
Tues, March 5 ...... Price Center, Gallery A

The Unseen Costs of Risk Management
http://enrollmentcentral.ucsd.edu/

Feb 28, 2002 8:30-11:00 a.m. Torrey Pines Ctr South
Learn how to manage costs related to work-related injuries, employment/general liability and auto accidents, thefts, flood and fire damage. Register online via Enrollment Central at http://enrollmentcentral.ucsd.edu/.

Campus Casualties
• A computer monitor being loaded onto a cart fell off and landed on an employee’s foot, fracturing it.
• Burnt retinas resulted when a researcher looked at UVAs for a couple of seconds while not wearing goggles.
• A Structural Engineering employee suffered a contused hand when it was caught between two pieces of steel.
• Wire from a cable snake that broke pierced the finger of a Housing employee. The finger became infected.
• Reaching to pull a heavy manual off an upper shelf strained the neck and upper back of an administrative employee.
• A tray hit a Food Services employee in the face and mouth, contusing his face and chipping a tooth.

Best Wishes for a happy and safe holiday season and new year!