

Holiday Safety

USC

*EH&S Fact Sheet
November 2004*

Decorating Tips

General Holiday Awareness

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH & SAFETY

University Park Campus
837 Downey Way, Stonier Hall 102B
Los Angeles, CA 90089-1143
Tel: 213-740-6448

Health Sciences Campus
1540 Alcazar St., CHP 148
Los Angeles, CA 90033-9005
Tel: 323-442-2200

<http://capsnet.usc.edu/ehs/>

Holiday decorations can be hazardous both at work and at home. When improperly selected and installed, the National Fire Protection Association estimates that each year there are approximately 500 Christmas tree fires. These cause more than 20 deaths, 117 injuries and \$20 million in damage.

1. Candles are not allowed in residence halls or as part of university decorations. **Note: 14% of the candle fires occur in December, almost twice the 8% monthly average. In 11% of the December candle fires, the fires begin when a decoration catches fire. This is true in only 2% of the fires during the rest of the year.**
2. Choose decorations made with flame-resistant, flame-retardant or non-combustible materials.
3. Purchase only lights and electrical decorations bearing the name of an independent testing lab (UL listed).
4. Live Christmas trees are not allowed in residence halls or offices and are discouraged throughout campus. If it is necessary to have a live tree, it must be certified as treated with flame retardant material. Contact Fire Safety at 213-740-6197 for more information on maintaining live trees.

Observe these additional holiday safety tips:

1. Test your smoke alarms and review your fire escape plans both at work and at home. Detector batteries should be changed as a matter of practice during daylight savings time changes (twice per year).
2. Statistics reported by MADD indicate that the largest number of alcohol-related traffic fatalities occur during the holiday season between Thanksgiving and New Years. Observe designated driver and safe driving practices.
3. Holidays often mean preparing large meals for family and friends. Wash hands, utensils, sink, and anything else that contacts raw poultry. Keep in mind that a stuffed bird takes longer to cook. For questions concerning holiday turkey preparation and cooking call the USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline at 1-800-535-4555.

EH&S Fact Sheets are intended for facilitating safety discussions in your department. Post the monthly topic on your departmental bulletin board.