

CHRISTMAS TREE SAFETY

In order to avoid inconvenience and misunderstandings, the following information is provided for all operators of hotels, apartment buildings, sanitariums, children's homes, boarding homes, hospitals, schools, day nurseries, department stores, theaters, places of public assembly (dance halls, restaurants, bars, etc.), banks, office buildings and other places where the public is invited or required to pass through.

Approval of Christmas trees, decorations or similar objects in the above listed buildings and places are subject to the following:

1. Location of tree, decorations, etc. shall not obstruct any exits or fire extinguishing devices.
2. All trees and/or decorative materials are to be made from a non-flammable material or treated and maintained in a flame-retardant condition by means of a solution or process approved by the State Fire Marshal. Certificate of compliance must be available upon request of the Fire Prevention Inspector.
3. The support device that holds a tree in an upright position shall be of a type that is stable and that:
 - a) does not damage or require removal of the tree stem base;
 - b) holds the tree securely and is of adequate size to avoid tipping over of the tree; and
 - c) is capable of containing a two-day minimum supply of water, covering the stem by at least 2 inches
4. Hot tap water shall be used when first filling a support stand, and the stand shall not be allowed to become dry of water. If a stand becomes dry, the tree shall be removed immediately.
5. Large trees should be secured by wires to prevent them from falling.
6. Light sets are to be approved by Underwriters Laboratories.
7. Fire extinguishers, rated at 2A-10BC or greater, are to be available.
8. Trees shall be checked for dryness by the following method: stand in front of a branch, grasp it with reasonably firm pressure and pull your hand toward you, allowing the branch to slip through your grasp. If the needles fall off readily, the tree does not have adequate moisture content, and it shall be removed immediately.
9. Candles and open flames shall not be used on or near a tree within a distance equal to the height of the tree.
10. Live potted trees do not require flame proofing.

If additional information is desired, please call the Fire Prevention Unit at (408) 730-7212.