

BOWDOIN COLLEGE
Office of Environmental Health and Safety
Holiday Decorations Policy

1. Purpose

The Bowdoin College Office of Environmental Health and Safety, in accordance with guidelines provided by the Brunswick Fire Department (BKFD) and the National Fire Prevention Association (NFPA), have formulated this policy to address fire safety issues of holiday decorations on campus.

2. Policy Scope

This policy affects Bowdoin staff, faculty, and students intending to decorate college-owned buildings for the holiday season.

3. Policy Owner

This policy is written and maintained by the office of Environmental Health and Safety (EHS). Any questions pertaining to this policy should be addressed with:

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4. Definitions

NFPA: National Fire Protection Association (NFPA): a United States-based organization that establishes and updates fire protection and prevention safeguards. NFPA publishes National Fire Codes, standards, manuals, and recommended practices. The Maine State Fire Marshal's Office and the Town of Brunswick have adopted the organization's standards.

Underwriters Laboratory Listed (UL-listed): a not-for-profit product safety testing, consulting and certification organization with a global reach and acceptance. UL provides safety-related testing, inspection, auditing, advising, validation and certification, as well as training services to a wide range of organizations including retailers, manufacturers, regulators, policymakers, service companies, and customers.

5. Procedures

College-owned buildings may be decorated for the holidays provided that the following procedures are followed:

- Decorations, and the installation of any decorations, must not cause any damage to College property; hooks or clips must be used instead of nails, screws or other hardware. Fasteners must not penetrate any roof surfaces.
- Decorations must not block, interfere with, or be hung from emergency exits or fire safety equipment, including exit signs, emergency lights, electrical/alarm panels, sprinklers, and fire extinguishers.
- Decorations may not block or impede egress pathways (hallways, doors, etc.)
- Climbing on surfaces, including but not limited to guardrails, roofs, balconies, parapets, etc. of buildings is prohibited, and decorations may not be hung higher than can be easily reached by a standard 6-foot stepladder.
- Ladders used must be fiberglass, and lights hung without power applied.
- Tampering with existing wiring and overloading of outlets are prohibited.
- For electrical decorations, only Underwriter Laboratory (UL-listed) miniature lights may be used (preferably LED lights) and must be rated for outdoor or indoor use depending on where they will be placed. No more than three strands of lights may be strung together at a time to prevent overloading. All lights must be turned off when a space is unoccupied and overnight or be on a timer rated for outdoor or indoor use depending on where it will be placed.

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- Use only UL-listed, grounded extension cords and select the appropriate use-type (indoor or outdoor). Extension cords must not be connected with each other to extend the length. Do not place extension cords under rugs or furniture, through ceilings or walls, or in high traffic areas.
- Live trees, wreaths, or other natural greenery, whether treated or untreated, are prohibited by fire code in all residence halls, dormitories, and college houses. Live greens may only be displayed in public areas of non-residential buildings, provided they are chemically treated for fire retardant and have a tag documenting same.
- Artificial trees/greens may be displayed with caution, but they must not block doorways or emergency exits and must not be placed near heat sources.
- Use of candles is strictly forbidden anywhere on campus.
- In areas served by fireplaces or gas stoves, no greens or other decorations may be installed within 3-feet of any open flame.
- College Housing policies do not permit decorations or signs on the outside of buildings or in exterior windows. Exceptions require the approval of the Office of Residential Life.

Facilities Management staff will assist if requested and time permits. Safety inspections will be conducted throughout the season to ensure that decorations installed are in compliance with this policy.

Campus Housing Requirements: Student Residences must remove all holiday decorations in common spaces before the end of fall semester (prior to the holiday break). Decorations found in place during the winter break inspections and building maintenance will be removed and disposed of by Facilities personnel.

Effective Date

November 30, 2017

Reviewed: 10/26/2019, 11/30/2021, 09/20/2022 ,11/30/2023, 09/11/2026