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Keeping students, faculty, staff and the family safe during the holidays is at the top of everyone's wish list. Safety precautions to consider during the holiday season include the following:

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## Holiday Decorations

- When putting up holiday decorations, always use the proper step stool or ladder to reach high places. **Chairs, tables and other furniture are not designed for use as an elevated work surface!** Injuries due to falls are a major holiday hazard: if you need to hang something higher than you can safely reach, use an approved ladder and not a chair, desk, or box. Make sure you know how to safely use a ladder.
- A fire extinguisher with a minimum of an "1A 10BC" rating should be readily available within 75 feet of the tree, wreaths and boughs.
- Christmas trees and/or holiday decorations shall not obstruct corridors, exit ways, or other means of egress.
- Plan your decorating to minimize tripping hazards or snagging clothes.
- Do not hang decorations on sprinkler heads and lights.
- Make sure seasonal decorations do not block, hide or obscure safety equipment such as fire alarm strobe lights or horns, safety signage or evacuation plans, fire extinguishers, safety showers or eyewash units.
- Do more with less; a little bit of bright holiday color can go a long way. Limit the amount of combustible paper or fabrics that are hung on doors, walls, and from ceilings to no more than 5% of the surface area. These materials can enable a fire to spread rapidly.
- At home, if you choose to use candles, please keep them away from decorations or other items that can burn or areas where children or pets can bump into them.



## Holiday Electrical Safety

- Discard or repair broken or cracked sockets, frayed or bare wires loose connections.
- Use battery-powered tea-lights, when a candle-light effect is desired.



or

As at all other times of the year, State law **prohibits** the use of lighted candles, incense, and other ember-producing materials in University buildings.

- Do not use electric lights on a metallic tree.

- Check your lights before decorating:
  - Make sure all holiday lighting has a label that says it is “UL listed”. If it doesn’t have this label, the lighting is not safe to use.
  - Use only light sets marked as “indoor” or “indoor/outdoor” inside buildings.
  - Make sure all the light sockets are filled before decorating.
  - Keep all lights away from combustible materials such as fabrics or paper decorations.
  - Don’t connect more than three strands of lights to one extension cord.
- Extension cords can be used with holiday decorations as long as the decorations are taken down within a few weeks.
- Make sure all light strands and electrical cords are free of cuts, crimps, cracks or repairs. Never use a “three-prong-to-two-prong” plug adapter to by-pass a grounded plug. Keep all electrical cords out of traffic areas, and not under rugs, through doorways or taped to the floor.
- Conserve electricity and prevent electrical fires: Turn off all lights, appliances and other electrical equipment when the room is unattended and before leaving for the day.



**DO NOT DAISY-CHAIN** or plug surge protectors/power strips/extension cords together, due to risk of overloading the circuit and potential fire hazard.

## Holiday Food Safety

- If you are serving food during the holiday season remember to keep your hot foods hot (>140 deg F) and cold foods cold (<40 deg F) while serving and storing.

## Resources

- Cal-OSHA Title 8 Regulations <https://www.dir.ca.gov/title8/sb5g1.html>
- National Fire Protection Agency (NFPA) Electric Code 70
- [https://www.ucop.edu/risk-services/\\_files/bsas/safetymeetings/powerstripsafety.pdf](https://www.ucop.edu/risk-services/_files/bsas/safetymeetings/powerstripsafety.pdf)
- <https://www.ehs.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/lines-of-services/workplace-safety/30extencords.pdf>

### Additional Safety Questions?

Contact EH&S at (949) 824-6200 or [safety@uci.edu](mailto:safety@uci.edu)