



STATE OF MARYLAND

DHMH

Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

Office of Health Care Quality

Spring Grove Center · Bland Bryant Building

55 Wade Avenue · Catonsville, Maryland 21228-4663

Martin O'Malley, Governor - Anthony G. Brown, Lt. Governor - Joshua M. Sharfstein M.D., Secretary

TO: Nursing Home Administrators
FROM: Margie Heald, Deputy Director – Federal Programs
RE: Holiday Decorations in Health Care Facilities
DATE: October 24, 2013

With the holiday season upon us, please ensure that your facility displays holiday decorations in accordance with **the 2000 edition of the Life Safety Code, section 19.7.5.4, and section 19.7.5.6 of the 2006 edition of the Life Safety Code.** Code states:

Combustible decorations shall be prohibited in any health occupancy unless they are flame retardant. The only exception to this code requirement is: Combustible decorations such as photographs and paintings, in such limited quantities that a hazard of fire development or spread is not present. The decorations must be labeled as fire retardant or the container they came in must state the decorations are flame retardant.

Decorative lighting such as string type lights shall be U/L approved/listed. Electric lights shall not be used on a metal artificial tree. Flame producing devices, such as, but not limited to, candles, may not be used on or near any type of tree. Live or cut trees are not permitted in nursing homes.

The facility must be able to show OHCQ surveyors the flame retardant statement on the decoration or the container that it was packaged in.

Holiday decorations, corkboard with memos, decorations attached to the corridor wall shall not exceed 20% of the wall surface.

The fact that the health care occupancy is protected by a full automatic sprinkler system does not change or void this code requirement.

If you have any questions regarding this information, contact your Life Safety Code surveyor through Deb Nicholson, at deb.nicholson@maryland.gov or at 410-402-8249.

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