

**Institutional Handbook of Operating Procedures
Policy 08.01.14**

Section: Health and Safety	Responsible Vice President: EVP of Business and Finance
Subject: Prevention, Occupational, and Environmental Medicine	Responsible Entity: Environmental Health and Safety

I. Title

Decorations Safety Policy

II. Policy

These guidelines have been developed in an effort to improve safety at UTMB and to meet requirements set forth by the National Fire Protection Association, the Underwriter’s Laboratories (UL), and by The Joint Commission.

The use of decorations at UTMB shall be in accordance with the following requirements:

1. Where decorations are used, they may not cover more than 20% of a given door, wall or ceiling that is decorated, and the decorations must attach directly to the surface.
2. Placement of all decorations shall not block or impede access to building life safety features, emergency equipment, facilities, or alarm devices, including but not limited to fire sprinklers, smoke detectors, fire extinguishers, exit signs, exit corridors, fire alarm pull stations, fire panels and fire department connections.
3. Decorations having a live flame are not allowed (e.g. candles, hurricane lamps).
4. Artificial trees and plants are permitted.
5. Potted live trees and plants with a consistent source of water are permitted.
6. Lights used for decorating shall be UL approved and of the non-heat producing variety (e.g. twinkle or LED lights).
7. Lights shall not be used on metallic artificial trees.
8. Bubble lights are prohibited.
9. Hanging decorations shall be at least 18” away from the ceiling and shall be hung by appropriate wire or string.
10. No decorations may be placed on doors that are fire-rated to 45 minutes or greater.
11. Decorations may not interfere with the proper operation of any door.

Note: Live plants in patient care areas may need to be approved by Healthcare Epidemiology for infection control purposes.

Natural cut greenery (e.g. trees, branches, wreaths and other items without a consistent source of water) are prohibited in patient care facilities, but may be used in non-patient care facilities as long as the following criteria are met:

1. Only permitted in prearranged areas
2. Must be treated with a flame retardant
3. Proof of flame retardant treatment must be kept in the immediate area where such items are used.
4. Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) shall be contacted in advance of using such items.

III. Monitoring Compliance

Environmental Health and Safety – Fire & Life Safety (EHS – F&LS) will monitor compliance with this policy. EHS – F&LS will conduct periodic surveys of all areas. EHS may, at any time, remove or order the removal of any decorations found in violation of this policy.

IV. Related UTMB Policies and Procedures

[IHOP – 08.01.20 – Open Flames Prohibited](#)

V. Dates Approved or Amended

<i>Originated: 04/01/1990</i>	
<i>Reviewed with Changes</i>	<i>Reviewed without Changes</i>
02/28/2014	04/12/2017

VI. Contact Information

EHS – Fire & Life Safety
 (409) 747-0515