



Holiday Tips For The Christmas Season

It's hard to believe, but the holiday season is upon us and Christmas will be here before we know it. It's time for the snow to start flying (in many areas), decorations to be dusted off and displayed and for the increased activities bringing additional guests to your facilities. This is why it's important to be extra vigilant when it comes to keeping your parishioners and guests safe. Keep in mind the following safety tips:

1. **Avoid slips, trips and falls!** Snow and ice accumulation needs to be monitored frequently. You should use a winter maintenance log to chart shoveling, salting and sanding activities. It is important to keep an accurate log of your winter ice/snow removal activities and retain these records for three years. Ensure floors are free of cords and other items running through walkways. Ensure rubber backed non-slip mats are provided inside each entrance door.
2. **Bump up your security!** Thieves love the holiday season. Keep all windows and doors locked and make sure doorways and parking lots are adequately lit in the evening hours. Designated individuals should patrol the parking lots during mass and during other large events to deter thieves from breaking into the parked vehicles. Remind parishioners to keep their packages out of sight in their vehicles.
3. **Protect your collections!** Collection monies tend to increase during the holiday season. Review and practice your archdiocesan fidelity control guidelines and make sure the money stays with the church and not in someone else's pockets.
4. **Practice candle safety!** Candles should be installed in a double insulated container and set on a noncombustible base. Candle wicks should be trimmed to approximately ¼ inch each time before burning. Ensure candles are properly extinguished immediately after use. No candles or open flame devices should be used around holiday decorations.
5. **Keep exit pathways clear!** During the holidays, Mass attendance increases dramatically. Ensure your overflow crowd does not impede exit pathways or exit doorways. Keep all holiday decorations out of these areas also.

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6. **Check those electrical cords!** All holiday lighting must be Underwriter Laboratory (UL) or Factory Mutual (FM) tested, approved and labeled. Holiday lights and electrical cords must be inspected to ensure they are in good condition and are safe to use. Do not allow electrical outlets and circuits to be overloaded with too many lights or other holiday decorations that use electricity.
7. **Beware of fires caused by live trees!** Use artificial trees and wreaths. Most fire regulations prohibit the use of live trees and wreaths in churches, schools and health care facilities. Even if local codes allow the use of live trees, we recommend against their use. If you still choose to use them in a display, follow proper care requirements. *Cut 1 1/2 to 2 inches off the bottom of the live tree and immediately place it in a sturdy, water holding stand. Let the tree sit overnight to acclimate to the conditions inside the building and to ensure it will absorb the water. When using more than one live tree, they must be kept at least 10 feet apart at all times. Once you are sure the tree can absorb the water, it can be decorated. Water the tree daily. Do not keep a live tree on display for longer than 15 days. After time, the tree will dry out quickly and become a serious fire hazard.*

The Risk Management Department at Catholic Mutual
would like to wish you a joyous and safe Christmas Season!!



Guidance for use of natural-cut trees

Combustible Vegetation [NFPA 1 (2024) 12.6.9]

Combustible vegetation, including natural cut Christmas trees, shall be in accordance with Section 12.6.9 [NFPA 1 (2024) 12.6.9.1]

Christmas tree placement within buildings shall comply with Table 12.6.9.1.1 [NFPA 1 (2024) 12.6.9.1.1]

In any occupancy, limited quantities of combustible vegetation shall be permitted where the AHJ determines that adequate safeguards are provided based on the quantity and nature of the combustible vegetation. [NFPA 1 (2024) 12.6.9.2]

Vegetation and Christmas trees shall not obstruct corridors, exit ways, or other means of egress. [NFPA 1 (2024) 12.6.9.3]

Combustible vegetation and natural cut Christmas trees shall not be located near heating vents or other fixed or portable heating devices that could cause it to dry out prematurely or to be ignited. [NFPA 1 (2024) 12.6.9.4]

Flammability of Combustible Artificial Decorative Vegetation [NFPA 1 (2021) 12.6.9.5]

Combustible artificial decorative vegetation shall meet one of the following:

- (1) The flame propagation performance criteria of Test Method 1 or Test Method 2, as appropriate, of NFPA 701
- (2) A maximum heat release rate of 100 kW when tested to NFPA 289, using the 20 kW ignition source 101:10.3.9.1 [NFPA 1 (2024) 12.6.9.5.1]

Each individual artificial decorative vegetation item shall be labeled to demonstrate compliance with 12.6.9.5.1 in an approved manner [NFPA 1 (2024) 12.6.9.5.2]

Provisions for Natural Cut Trees [NFPA 1 (2024) 12.6.9.6]

Where a natural cut tree is permitted {see Table 10.14.1.1 on page 2 for allowable occupancies}, the bottom end of the trunk shall be cut off with a straight fresh cut at least 1/2 in (13 mm) above the end prior to placing the tree in a stand to allow the tree to absorb water. [NFPA 1 (2024) 12.6.9.6.1]

The tree shall be placed in a suitable stand with water. [NFPA 1 (2024) 12.6.9.6.2]

The water level shall be maintained above the fresh cut and checked at least once daily. [NFPA 1 (2024) 12.6.9.6.3]

The tree shall be removed from the building immediately upon evidence of dryness. [NFPA 1 (2024) 12.6.9.6.4*]

A method to check for dryness is to grasp a tree branch with a reasonably firm pressure and pull your hand to you, allowing the branch to slip through your grasp. If the needles fall off readily, the tree does not have adequate moisture content and should be removed. [NFPA 1 (2024) A.12.6.9.6.4]

Table 12.6.9.1.1 Provisions for Christmas Trees by Occupancy

Occupancy	No Trees Permitted	Cut Tree Permitted With Automatic Sprinkler Systems	Cut Tree Permitted Without Automatic Sprinkler Systems	Balled Tree Permitted
Ambulatory health care				X
Apartment buildings		Within unit	Within Unit	X
Assembly	X			
Board and care	X			
Business		X		X
Daycare		X		X
Detention and correctional	X			
Dormitories	X			
Educational	X			
Health Care				X
Hotels	X			
Industrial		X	X	X
Lodging and rooming				X
Mercantile		X		X
One and two family		X	X	X
Storage		X	X	X

NFPA 1.4.1 **Equivalencies.** Nothing in the Code is intended to prevent the use of systems, methods, or devices of equivalent or superior quality, strength, fire resistance, effectiveness, durability, and safety to those prescribed in this Code, provided technical documentation is submitted to the AHJ to demonstrate equivalency and the system, method, or device is approved for the intended purpose.