

FESTIVE *Policy*



East Kent Hospitals University NHS Foundation Trust Building and Fire Safety at Christmas

This is a time of celebration and cheer when we all aim to pass on the festive spirit to the patients and visitors! The festive period sees the introduction of decorations. Sometimes these may unintentionally create hazards or cause damage. Here is a summary of Trust Policy to ensure we all keep safe and look after our workplace:

Decorations should not be displayed before 6th December and **must** be taken down by 6th January. It is recommended that a single artificial tree be located off patient access routes. However, if there is a location identified by Risk Assessment as safe and suitable for decorations, the following guidance should be followed:

PLEASE NOTE: NATURAL CHRISTMAS TREES ARE NOT ACCEPTABLE WITHIN ANY TRUST BUILDING.

A risk assessment must be carried out in each department to check the following:

- **The location** – ensure the items provided **do not** compromise a means of escape for patients staff and visitors. i.e. They are not sited adjacent to fire exit doors, potential ignition sources, areas containing high fire loading (combustible materials), or in a “dead end” corridor (escape in one direction only).
- **Observation** – The items are **only** displayed in an area under the direct control of staff. i.e. within a department.
- The decoration of emergency equipment including Fire Extinguishers, Fire Alarms and Fire Exits is not permitted.
- **All decorations must be flame retardant** - Metal foil type is recommended. Christmas decorations hung from walls and ceilings **must have** natural breaks built into the display, at least 3 metres apart (e.g. not continuous along corridor walls).
- Decorations are not to interfere with fire detection or firefighting equipment (extinguishers / blankets).
- Metal strip type decorations **must not** be fastened to, or in close proximity to any electrical fitting as they may conduct electricity.
- Sellotape or Blu Tack is **not permitted** for use on walls. It causes considerable damage. Any blu-tack used for fixing anywhere else should be white blu-tack.
- Any decorations being installed at height will require an additional risk assessment for the use of steps and ladders.

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- **Decorative lights** - should only be displayed on Christmas trees and limited to two sets per tree. They should be kept to a minimum and must not be fastened to, or in close proximity to light fittings or any other potential ignition source.

Please note: No mains powered lights, they must be battery operated. They should be powered by batteries which are AAA or AA, and non rechargeable.

*Allow sufficient time for the lights to be tested! Normal 'Electrical Safety' guidelines must still be taken into consideration.

- **Fibre Optic trees/displays** - Must be inspected as per above. These items have transformers that generate heat when in use:
 - * Where the transformer is in the base of the unit, or in-line between the plug and the unit, it must be placed on a non-combustible surface.
 - * If the transformer is part of the plug, ensure that no combustible materials are in close proximity to the socket.
- Decorative lights/fibre optic displays must be switched off overnight and whenever the area is to be left unattended.
- **Lighted candles** - "Tea lights," night-lights or any other type of naked flame must not be used under any circumstances.
- Cotton wool, crêpe paper, polystyrene or similar materials must not be used under any circumstances.
- **Christmas cards** - Especially where wall mounted, must be limited on escape/circulation routes. Note: no Blu Tack or sellotape on plaster walls.
- No decorations of any kind around PC equipment, which will inhibit the air flow.
- Minimal decorations in wards in the corridors, not bays or single rooms, but vinyl window decorations for example, may be used in those areas.
- Any decorations on wards / in clinical settings areas must be positioned so as not prevent cleaning
- Decorations on wards where outbreaks occur must be removed and disposed of as infectious clinical waste
- Any food prepared must not be left out at room temperature for any longer than four hours maximum.

*Extra care should be taken throughout this period to ensure the additional items brought into Trust premises remain in a safe condition. Please look after your ward and departments.

Please have a safe, happy Christmas and New Year!