

FIRE AND SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CASWELL COUNTY SCHOOLS

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

1. In no case shall combustible decorations exceed twenty percent of any individual wall area.
2. The hanging and displaying of decorative material shall be prohibited from acoustical ceiling systems that are part of a fire resistant floor/ceiling or roof/ceiling assembly. Storage or placement of combustible material within twenty four inches (24") of any ceiling is expressly prohibited.
3. All classroom doors with glass panels must have line of sight into and out of these classrooms. Line of sight into all classrooms shall not be limited or minimized.
4. The attachment of combustible decorations to fire resistant rated doors, including but not limited to classroom doors, which modifies said door's conformity to ASTM E119 relating to its ability to withstand fire exposure is prohibited.
5. All curtains must be constructed of a fire retardant material or treated with a fire resistant process.
6. Windows and/or blinds must remain free of all material to allow for emergency rescue and egress. This also permits proper cleaning thus improving air quality, reduces fire spread risk, and allows for proper use of light controlling design of blinds.
7. Maintain proper housekeeping and storage protocol procedures in all boiler and mechanical/electrical rooms; this includes janitors' closets and supply rooms, as well as communication head-in rooms. This requires the removal of all combustible material. All flammable material must be stored in a detached, unoccupied structure in a properly rated container or in a cabinet rated for the storage of this material. Storage of noncombustible material may not restrict access to mechanical or electrical equipment in any manner. Specifically a working space of not less than 30" in width, 36" in depth, and 78" in height shall be provided in front of electrical service equipment. Where electrical service equipment is wider than 30", the working space shall not be less than the width of the equipment. No storage of any materials shall be permitted within the designated working space. This recommendation is also applicable to mobile/modular units even when the panel box is located in the classroom area.
8. Extension cords are for temporary use only and should not be used as a substitute for permanent wiring. Extension cords or surge suppressors must be plugged directly into permanent wiring. The practice of plugging one such device into another, or into an extension cord is prohibited. Extension cords or surge suppressors shall not be affixed to structures, extended through walls, ceilings or floors, or under doors or floor covering, nor should such cords be subject to environmental damage or physical impact. Extension cords shall be used only with portable appliances.
9. All upholstered furnishings (couches, chairs, bean bags etc.) shall bear a label confirming compliance with California Technical Bulletin 117 (CA TB 117). Noncompliant items are not permitted.
10. Portable electric, kerosene, etc., heaters are not approved for educational occupancies. If auxiliary heat source is required; contact Facilities Personnel for assistance.

* These Ten General Recommendations should be complied with as part of a Safe Schools Program. They are critical to preventing avoidable losses, insuring positive underwriting decisions, and subsequently keeping your property insurance cost as low as possible. Please provide each school with a copy.

SCHOOL INSURANCE FUND

POSITION STATEMENTS

The following Position Statements are offered as Policy Guidance as it relates to Safety and Risk Management within School Facilities and Classrooms.

SEASONAL DECORATIONS IN SCHOOLS

Each year, as the holiday seasons approach, we receive numerous inquiries related to the use of Christmas trees and other seasonal decorations in schools. Because of the potential safety hazards to students and staff posed by the use of certain types of decorations, the following information is provided. Reference is made to the North Carolina State Fire Prevention Code, (2012 Edition) excerpted below. Specific inquiries as to the requirements or interpretation of the Code should be directed to your local Fire Marshal, Code Enforcement Official or the Engineering & Codes Division of the North Carolina Office of the State Fire Marshal at 919.661.5880.

Section 806 :: Decorative Vegetation In New And Existing Buildings

806.1 Natural cut trees.

Natural cut trees, where allowed by this section, shall have the trunk bottoms cut off at least 0.5 inch (12.7 mm) above the original cut and shall be placed in a support device complying with Section 806.1.2.

806.1.1 Restricted occupancies.

Natural cut trees shall be prohibited in Group A, E, I-1, I-2, I-3, I-4, M, R-1, R-2 and R-4 occupancies.

Exceptions:

1. Trees located in areas protected by an approved automatic sprinkler system installed in accordance with Section 903.3.1.1 or 903.3.1.2 shall not be prohibited in Groups A, E, M, R-1 and R-2.
2. Trees shall be allowed within dwelling units in Group R-2 occupancies.

806.1.2 Support devices.

The support device that holds the tree in an upright position shall be of a type that is stable and that meets all of the following criteria:

1. The device shall hold the tree securely and be of adequate size to avoid tipping over of the tree.
2. The device shall be capable of containing a minimum 2-day supply of water.
3. The water level, when full, shall cover the tree stem at least 2 inches (51 mm). The water level shall be maintained above the fresh cut and checked at least once daily.

806.1.3 Dryness.

The tree shall be removed from the building whenever the needles or leaves fall off readily when a tree

branch is shaken or if the needles are brittle and break when bent between the thumb and index finger. The tree shall be checked daily for dryness.

806.2 Artificial vegetation.

Artificial decorative vegetation shall meet the flame propagation performance criteria of NFPA 701. Meeting the flame propagation performance criteria of NFPA 701 shall be documented and certified by the manufacturer in an approved manner.

806.3 Obstruction of means of egress.

The required width of any portion of a means of egress shall not be obstructed by decorative vegetation.

806.4 Open flame.

Candles and open flames shall not be used on or near decorative vegetation. Natural cut trees shall be kept a distance from heat vents and any open flame or heat-producing devices at least equal to the height of the tree.

806.5 Electrical fixtures and wiring.

The use of unlisted electrical wiring and lighting on natural cut trees and artificial decorative vegetation shall be prohibited. The use of electrical wiring and lighting on artificial trees constructed entirely of metal shall be prohibited.

APPLIANCES IN CLASSROOMS

The "Fund's" position has been to discourage locating appliances; such as; microwave ovens, toaster ovens, coffee pots, hot plates, and refrigerators, throughout the school and encourage location and use in lounges and teaching kitchens. Safety being our main concern, we reason that centralizing them reduces risk by controlling access, limiting the number of hazard points in the building and lessens the possibility of misuse. In addition to the safety enhancements, we believe centralization and limitation of appliances has other benefits to school systems in the form of reduced energy consumption and a reduction in the possibility of electrical system overload or necessity of increasing electrical capacity. If a mentioned appliance is mandated to meet instructional or medical needs, we ask you initiate the following actions to assure safe use.

1. Classroom authorization is designated at the Superintendent level. This should include referencing the applicable and appropriate educational or medical mandate necessitating such usage.
2. The maintenance department's licensed electrical staff evaluates and certifies that utilization of such appliances does not present an undue risk of overloading the sites electrical infrastructure.
3. The subsequent authorization and approval documentation is present for inspection in the school's office and in the classroom where such appliances are being utilized.
4. In addition, we recommend appliances in classrooms approved for instructional use only, are disengaged from the electrical system, cleaned, and properly stored at the end of each instructional session.

Adherence to the above policy will hopefully lead to a positive educational environment and one that is as safe as possible. Other benefits include a positive underwriting decision, which leads to better insurance coverage and lower costs for that coverage.

Also, be aware that "Local Authorities" in their jurisdictions have fire and mechanical codes that require them to insure appliances are safely installed and used. In addition, they are empowered to order them removed if found unsafe. Fire Code references include 110.3, 305.1, and 603.7.