

**University of Portland Decorations Policy**  
**Updated November 2019**

**Use of Combustible Materials:**

The use of combustible materials in Residence Halls is regulated by the Portland Fire Department. Combustible materials includes (but is not limited to) paper, foam, plastic, cotton, cloth, vegetation, moss, straw, hay, vines, split bamboo, leaves and similar materials. These following must be followed when using combustible materials as decorations:

- Combustible materials in residence hall rooms shall not exceed more than 50% of the wall surface.
- Combustible materials in hallways shall not exceed more than 10% of the wall surface.
- No combustibles shall be placed on doors, doorways or stairwells.
- Combustible materials for holiday displays such as hay bales, corn stalks, or similar decorative
- combustible materials are not allowed in University facilities unless rendered flame resistant by treating
- with a fire retardant.
- Nothing may be attached to or resting on smoke detectors, heat detectors, or sprinkler heads.
- Hose cabinets, fire extinguishers, cabinets, and fire alarm stations may not be covered or obscured with any decorative materials.
- Exit and emergency lighting systems may not be covered or obscured.
- No open flames, candles, or incense may be used.
- Colored lights may not be installed in corridor lighting fixtures.

**Exit Path Obstructions:**

Displays and decorations, of any type, shall not be placed where they can obstruct any exit paths or obstruct the exit path in any exit corridor.

**Christmas/Winter Holiday Decorations:**

All displays of wreaths or other holiday decorations must be fire retardant.

Lights: Twinkly lights are permitted for a 30-day period during the holiday season. Lights must be removed by the end of winter break. No more than 3 strands of seasonal lights may be combined in a string for any indoor decoration.

Christmas Trees: Christmas trees are allowed from the beginning of December to the start of Christmas break. Christmas trees must be removed from residence halls during Christmas break.

**Residence Hall Haunted House:** If a residence hall would like to have a haunted house, a plan must be submitted to Environmental Health & Safety for review. Once the plan is reviewed and approved by EHS, the Residence Hall must obtain a permit from the Portland Fire Department. A permit must be applied for 6 weeks in advance online or in person and must be received from Portland Fire 21 days in advance of the event. The fee is the responsibility of the department organizing the Haunted House. Arrangements must be made with PFD for a required visual inspection around the time of the event (the inspection should be scheduled approximately 3 weeks in advance). All final documentation must be sent to [ehs@up.edu](mailto:ehs@up.edu) for recordkeeping.

The following rules must be followed to host a Haunted House, and information about this must be submitted in the plan to EHS:

- A detailed floor plan, to scale, showing direction of travel for participants and exits, maximum occupancy within the haunted house, its location on the facility, a list of materials to be used, lighting and electrical connections, emergency equipment such as fire extinguishers and flashlights, and a supervision plan. The plan should be submitted to Public Safety no later than **1 week prior to the event** to allow enough time for review and approval.
- All decorations used in a haunted house that are considered combustible must be rendered flame resistant by treating with a fire retardant. "Flame resistant" means that the material treated with fire retardant will not burn when a heat source (e.g. a match or lighter) is applied to it.
- A walkway must be maintained throughout the haunted house with a minimum of 4 ft. wide and 6'8" ft. high.
- There must be a fire extinguisher present at each exit. The extinguishers cannot be covered by decorations. The maximum travel distance to any extinguisher can not exceed 50 feet. Staff members shall be instructed in proper use of extinguishers.
- If the area is setup using a maze concept, there may be no dead-end corridors. The maze must have obvious exits out of the maze for approximately every 50 feet of linear travel.
- Exits shall be a minimum of 3 ft wide and 6'8" high. They shall have lighted exit signs placed above them. Centered above each marked "EXIT", there must be an electrically powered, battery back-up exit sign with two emergency lights, or a heavy paper/cardboard exit sign with 12" red fluorescent letters on a white background. Permanent exit lighting in the building will suffice as long as it is not obstructed. There must be one exit for every fifty (50 ft.) linear feet of travel. Emergency exit signs must be illuminated at all times and cannot be covered by decorations.
- Flammables are not allowed at any time by anyone inside the building. Smoking is prohibited at all times in accordance with the UP Smoking Policy. There shall be no open-flame devices or temporary heaters used in the building and/or structure, unless prior approval is obtained from the Fire Marshal. The use of untreated fire-retardant material is prohibited.
- Occupancy during the event at any time shall be limited to a specific number, as determined by the Fire Marshal's Office. A group shall consist of no more than 20 persons as determined by the Fire Marshal. Each group of children 12 and under must be accompanied or supervised by a staff person who is 18 years of age or older. Staff person must have in their possession, an operable flashlight, and shall be completely familiar with the facility. The staff person shall be thoroughly instructed on an approved evacuation plan for the facility, and be able to assist the public in the event of the emergency.

- The Portland Fire Department's Office must be contacted for any event that involves bringing the public into residence halls. The areas will require an inspection of the area that will be used, visited by the public. A permit may be required for conducting a haunted house. Please contact Public Safety at 503.943.7161 for further direction. The fire marshal may be contacted at 503.823.3955 for further information on permit and inspection requirements.
- Please contact [ehs@up.edu](mailto:ehs@up.edu) with any questions.