



CITY OF FOUNTAIN VALLEY FIRE DEPARTMENT

(714) 593-4436 Office

(714) 593-4508 Fax

10200 Slater Avenue, Fountain Valley, CA 92708

CITY OF FOUNTAIN VALLEY FIRE PREVENTION BUREAU

Telephone: (714) 593-4436
INFORMATION SHEET

REQUIREMENTS FOR CHRISTMAS TREES IN NEW AND EXISTING OCCUPANCIES

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this guideline is to assist anyone, including business owners and managers, school officials, and maintenance workers with understanding the requirements of the California Fire Code Section 806 and the California Code of Regulations, Title 19 regarding the use of Christmas trees in public assemblies, schools, institutions, retail stores, high-rise buildings, and public areas of hotels, motels, apartments, and condominium buildings.

SCOPE:

The requirements in this guideline apply to State Fire Marshal-regulated occupancies including Group A, E, I-1, I-2, I-3, I-4, M, R-1, R-2, and R-4 occupancies as defined in Chapter 2 of the California Fire Code.

OCCUPANCY TYPES:

- Christmas trees are **prohibited** in Group I-1, I-2, I-3, I-4, and R-4 occupancies per CFC 806.1.1. These are primarily hospitals, nursing homes, prisons, residential care facilities, and other occupancies where persons may require the assistance of others to exit.
- Christmas trees are **permitted** in the following occupancies only when they are protected by an approved automatic sprinkler system: Group A, E, M, R-1, and R-2. These include but are not limited to public assemblies such as restaurants and bars, schools, retail stores, high-rise buildings, and common areas of hotels, motels, and apartments/condos with more than two units.

Per Title 19, Division 1, §3.08:

- In public assemblies, schools, and common areas of residential buildings, Christmas trees, and other decorative vegetation shall be treated with a flame-retardant solution or process approved by the State Fire Marshal.
- This Flame-retardant solution must be applied by a certified applicator registered with the California State Fire Marshal.
- Treated trees shall have a tag with the CSFM Seal of Registration affixed to the tree.

OCCUPANCY TYPE	NOT PERMITTED	REQUIRES FIRE RETARDANT	REQUIRES SPRINKLERS IN BUILDING
Hospitals, prisons, nursing homes, residential care	X		
Schools k-12, public assemblies, common areas, or residential buildings		X	X
Retail stores and high-rise buildings			X

REQUIREMENTS WHERE CHRISTMAS TREES ARE PERMITTED:

1. Exits, exit lights, fire alarm sending stations, hose cabinets, and fire extinguishers shall not be blocked, in whole or in part, by any Christmas trees or decorative material.
2. Christmas trees shall be kept a distance from heat-producing devices such as heat vents or open flames, at least equal to the height of the tree.
3. The use of unlisted electrical wiring and lighting on Christmas trees and artificial decorative vegetation shall be prohibited.
4. Trees shall have the trunk bottoms cut off at least 0.5 inches above the original cut and supported in a device in compliance with the following section per CFC 806.1.2:
 - a. The device shall hold the tree securely and be of adequate size to avoid tipping over.
 - b. The device shall be capable of containing a minimum two-day supply of water.
 - c. The water level, when full, shall cover the tree stem at least 2 inches. The water level shall be maintained above the fresh cut and checked at least once daily.
5. Dryness: The trees 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. Trees shall be checked daily for dryness.

ARTIFICIAL TREES:

1. Artificial trees and vegetation shall meet the flame propagation performance criteria of NFPA 701. This information should be verified prior to purchase of the tree by noting the information on the packaging included with the tree. The information shall be retained and readily available upon inspection by a member of the Fountain Valley Fire Department.
2. The use of electrical wiring and lighting on artificial trees constructed entirely of metal shall be prohibited.