



SEASONAL DECORATIVE ITEMS and CHRISTMAS TREES

Requirements of the Vermont Fire and Building Safety Codes

CODE INFORMATION SHEET
2015

NFPA 1 – 10.13 Combustible Vegetation.

Combustible vegetation, including natural cut Christmas trees, shall be in accordance with Table 1:10.13.1.1

Combustible Vegetation: In other than Health Care, Detention and Correctional occupancies, combustible vegetation, including natural cut Christmas trees otherwise prohibited under table 10.13.1 shall be permitted when located in areas protected by an approved automatic fire sprinkler system



Table 10.13.1.1 as amended under Vermont Fire & Building Safety Code

Occupancy	No Natural Trees Permitted	Cut Natural tree PERMITTED with A sprinkler system	Cut Natural tree PERMITTED without A Sprinkler system	Balled tree Permitted
Ambulatory Health care		X		X
Apartment buildings		Within Unit	Within Unit	X
Assembly		X		
Board and Care		X		
Business		X		X
Day-care		X		X
Detention and Correctional	X			
Dormitories		X		
Educational		X		
Health care	X			
Hotels		X		
Industrial		X	X	X
Lodging and rooming		X		X
Mercantile		X		X
One and Two Family		X	X	X
Storage		X	X	X

Provisions for Natural Cut Trees;

Where a natural cut tree is permitted, the bottom end of the trunk shall be cut off with a straight fresh cut at least ½ in. (13 mm) above the end prior to placing the tree in a stand to allow the tree to absorb water. 1:10.13.9.1

The tree shall be placed in a suitable stand with water. 1:10.13.9.2

The water level shall be maintained above the fresh cut and checked at least once daily. 1:10.13.9.3

The tree shall be removed from the building immediately upon evidence of dryness. 1:10.13.9.4

Electrical Fire Safety;

Extension cords shall be plugged directly into an approved receptacle, power tap, or multi-plug adapter and shall, except for approved multi-plug extension cords, serve only one portable appliance. 1:11.1.5.1

The ampacity of the extension cords shall not be less than the rated capacity of the portable appliance supplied by the cord. 1:11.1.5.2

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Electrical Fire Safety. cont.

The extension cords shall be maintained in good condition without splices, deterioration, or damage. 1:11.1.5.3

Multi-plug adapters, such as multi-plug extension cords, cube adapters, strip plugs, and other devices, shall be listed and used in accordance with their listing. 1:11.1.5.1

Extension cords and flexible cords shall not be affixed to structures; extend through walls, ceilings, or floors, or under doors or floor coverings; or be subject to environmental or physical damage. 1:11.1.5.5

Temporary electrical power and lighting installations shall be permitted for a period not to exceed 90 days for holiday decorative lighting and similar purposes. [70:590.3(B)] 1:11.1.6.3

Provisions for Flame Resistance or Fire Residence.

Artificial vegetation and artificial Christmas trees shall be labeled or otherwise identified or certified by the manufacturer as being fire retardant. 1:10.13.3.1

Such fire retardance shall be demonstrated by each individual decorative vegetation item, including any decorative lighting, in an approved manner. 1:10.13.3.2

Vegetation and Christmas trees shall not obstruct corridors, exit ways, or other means of egress. 1:10.14.4

Only listed electrical lights and wiring shall be used on natural or artificial combustible vegetation, natural or artificial Christmas trees, and other similar decorations. 1:10.13.5

Electrical lights shall be prohibited on metal artificial trees. 1:10.13.6

Open flames such as from candles, lanterns, kerosene heaters, and gas-fired heaters shall not be located on or near combustible vegetation, Christmas trees, or other similar combustible materials. 1:10.13.7

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. 1:10.13.8

Additional Holiday Decorating Safety Tips

The use of holiday decorations such as Christmas trees, garlands, electric lights and candles can increase the incidence of holiday fires. Following a few simple fire safety tips can help ensure that you and your loved ones have a fire-safe holiday season:

- **Make sure your natural tree is fresh (fresh needles won't break when you bend them)**
- **Cut off one to two inches of the trunk and place it in a stable holder keeping the holder full of water.**
- **Keep the tree away from sources of heat to prevent your tree from drying.**
- **Use only flame-proof listed decorations and check the wiring on all your electrical decorations before you put them up.**
- **Do not overload electrical outlets or extension cords. Do not link more than three light strands unless the directions indicate it is safe.**
- **Never put tree branches or needles in a fireplace or wood burning stove. Dry needles and branches will spark when ignited and may ignite nearby combustibles.**
- **The best way to dispose of your tree is by taking it to a recycling center or having it hauled away by a community pick-up service.**
- **As you're putting away electrical light strings, take time to inspect each for flaws. Throw out light sets if they have loose connections, broken or cracked sockets or frayed or bare wires.**
- **Do not place a faulty set of lights back into the storage box for next year's use, replace damaged light strings with new energy-efficient LED lights.**

