



STATE OF DELAWARE
OFFICE OF THE STATE FIRE MARSHAL

JOHN W. RUDD
STATE FIRE MARSHAL

DOVER OFFICE
HEADQUARTERS

November 22, 2023

Dear Business Owner,

As the busy holiday season approaches, our agency requests that you remember several fire-safety related items to ensure the safest season for you, your staff, and your customers:

1. All exit doors and paths leading to exit doors must not be locked, blocked, or obstructed in any way.
2. All aisles should be clear of displays or other items which may cause a tripping hazard.
3. The typical minimum aisle width is 36" clear, and for larger stores a 60" aisle is required.
4. All fire protection systems should be up to date on their inspections and must be left on at all times.
5. The manager or person in charge shall ensure that overcrowding does not occur.
6. Pyrotechnic devices and open flames are not permitted.
7. There are specific requirements for the display of a live Christmas Tree:
 - Natural cut Christmas trees, including living trees in a balled condition with their roots protected by an earth ball, shall not be permitted in Assembly, Educational, Health Care, Residential Board and Care, Detention and Correctional, Mercantile, Hotel, or Dormitory occupancies.
Exception No. 1: Trees located in areas protected by an approved automatic fire sprinkler system.
 - Artificial Christmas trees shall be labeled or otherwise identified or certified by the manufacturer as being "flame retardant" or "flame resistive."
 - No Christmas trees shall be allowed to obstruct exits in any way or be located in corridors, exit ways, or other means of egress.
 - Only listed electrical lights and wiring shall be used on Christmas trees and similar decorations.
 - Electrical lights are prohibited on metal artificial trees.
 - Open flames such as from candles, lanterns, kerosene heaters, and gas fired heaters shall not be located on or near Christmas trees or other similar combustible materials.
 - Natural cut Christmas trees shall not be located near heating vents or other fixed or portable heating devices that could cause the tree to dry out prematurely or to be ignited.
 - In occupancies where natural trees are permitted, the bottom end of the trunk shall be cut-off at an angle at least one to two inches (1-2") above the end to help the tree absorb water. The tree shall be placed in a suitable stand with adequate water. The water level shall be checked and maintained on a daily basis. The tree shall be removed from the building immediately upon evidence of dryness.

If you have any questions, please contact the division office for the county in which your business is located:

New Castle County: 302-323-5375

Kent County: 302-739-4447

Sussex County: 302-856-5600