Here are a few fire safety tips and regulations to use when getting ready as the holiday season approaches here at Creighton University.

Please Note: Students living in the residence halls please see “Decorating Guidelines and Holiday Safety Tips” published by Residence Life for regulations.

At Creighton, all decorations are to be flame and smoke free. This means holiday candles and incense are restricted.

**General Holiday Decorating Safety**

- The International Fire Code requires that artificial trees be used in residence halls and medical areas. Creighton University recommends that artificial trees and greenery be used in all other areas. These and all other types of decorations must be flame retardant or be treated with a flame retardant chemical. This includes paper signs, banners and home made decorations that may be put up. Read the manufacturers’ information on decorations. If a decoration is not listed as flame resistant or it is homemade, then it must be treated with a flame retardant before it is used in these locations. (Not all material can be treated. Please call the numbers below to determine if an item can be treated.)

- You must not block stairs or doorways. Hanging decorations can not block light fixtures or emergency exit signs. Items can not be placed so that the exit halls are partially blocked.

- Decorations can not be hung from electrical fixtures or any emergency/ life safety device such as exit signs, fire sprinklers, fire detection devices and fire alarm system devices.

- If natural Christmas decorations are used in locations other than residence halls, please use the following guidelines. When buying a natural tree or garland, the most important safety precaution is freshness of the natural decorations. The higher the moisture content, the less likely it is to dry out and become a fire hazard. Check for freshness by examining the needles. Bend them between your fingers. They shouldn’t break. Tap the tree gently on a firm surface, if many needles fall off, the tree is too dry. Shake branches used for garland and wreaths to see if needles fall off. You can’t depend on the color of the material as many are sprayed green. To keep
your tree fresh longer, cut off two inches of the trunk and place it in a sturdy water holding stand with wide spread legs. Place the tree and garland away from all heat sources. Keep watering your tree. Please call EH&S before using natural trees and garland.

- Dispose of the tree and garland when needles begin to fall off. **Please Note that all natural decorations must be removed by the end of the day on the last day before Christmas break. The campus is closed for over a week following this date and the natural decorations will dry out during this period and become extreme fire hazards.**

- Artificial Trees: Artificial trees must bear the UL label and should be made of fire resistant material. This does not mean that the tree will not burn, but only that it will not catch fire easily. Keep artificial trees away from heat sources.

- Strings of Lights: Use only UL approved lighting. Inspect electric lights for broken or cracked sockets and frayed wires; replace if necessary. Do not use outdoor lights indoors or vice-versa. Do not overload extension cords, and do not connect more than three sets of lights to one cord. Outlets should be readily accessible for quick disconnection if necessary. Never use lighted candles as decorations. All lights should be securely fastened to the tree. No bulbs should come in contact with needles or branches. Turn off all holiday lights when you leave an area or leave for home each day.

- Environmental Health and Safety staff will conduct a fire safety walk through of all buildings on campus. Decorations will be checked to determine if they meet guidelines and the International Fire Code.

Following these guidelines will help make this a happy holiday for everyone. Help reduce the risk of fires and help keep Creighton safe. If you have any questions please call Curtis Tate at 402-546-6252, John Baxter at 402-546-6269 or Justin Burgett, Environmental Health and Safety, 402-546-6400.

**Thank you for your compliance with this important safety issue!**