Fire Code Information Sheet

The following items are a reprint of the requirements relating to Christmas or natural trees and decorative vegetation found in the 2015 Minnesota State Fire Code (MSFC) Section 806.

Contact your local fire code official for any specific rules your community may have. See Section 806.1.4 for information on natural wreaths and 806.2 for artificial wreaths.

MSFC Section 806

806.1.1 Natural or resin-bearing trees. The use, display, or storage of natural or resin-bearing trees for use or decoration inside buildings shall be in accordance with Sections 806.1.1 through 806.1.1.5.

- **806.1.1.1 Group R occupancies.** The use and display of natural or resin-bearing trees inside dwelling units of Group R-2 and R-3 occupancies is permitted.

- **806.1.1.2 Sprinkler protected areas.** Trees located in areas protected by an approved automatic sprinkler system installed in accordance with Section 903.3.1.1 or 903.3.1.2 in all occupancies except Group I are permitted.

- **806.1.1.3 Where allowed.** Trees without open flames or electric lights are allowed in Group A used for worship purposes, Group B, E, and M occupancies.

- **806.1.1.4 Restricted.** Trees used inside buildings for other occupancies or conditions are not allowed.

- **806.1.1.5 Location.** The use and display of natural or resin-bearing trees shall not be placed in a location that would obstruct egress, fire protection systems and equipment, and shall not be allowed to accumulate inside a building. In buildings where more than one tree is located, they shall be separated by at least 20 feet as measured from the tree branches.

806.1.2 Support devices. The support device that holds the tree in an upright position shall be of a type that is stable and that meets all of the following criteria:
1. The device shall hold the tree securely and be of adequate size to avoid tipping over of the tree.
2. The device shall be capable of containing a minimum two-day supply of water.
3. The water level, when full, shall cover the tree stem at least 2 inches (51 m). The water level shall be maintained above the fresh cut and checked at least once daily.
806.1.3 Dryness. The tree 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. The tree shall be checked daily for dryness.

806.1.4 Decorative natural vegetation. The use, display, or storage of wreaths, hay bales, corn stalks, and other cut natural decorative vegetation shall be in accordance with Sections 806.1.4.1 through 806.1.4.4.

- 806.1.4.1 Occupancies. Limited quantities of cut natural decorative vegetation shall be permitted where the fire code official determines that adequate safeguards are provided based on the quantity and nature of the combustible vegetation.

- 806.1.4.2 Group I occupancies. Cut, natural, decorative vegetation is not permitted in Group I occupancies.

- 806.1.4.3 Group M occupancies. The use and display of decorative natural vegetation for resale in Group M occupancies is permitted.

- 806.1.4.4 Location. The use and display of cut natural decorative vegetation shall not obstruct aisles, egress, or exit paths; block access to fire protection systems or equipment; and shall not accumulate inside a building.

806.2 Artificial vegetation. Artificial decorative vegetation shall meet the flame propagation performance criteria of NFPA 701. Meeting the flame propagation performance criteria of NFPA 701 shall be documented and certified by the manufacturer in an approved manner. Alternatively, the artificial decorative vegetation item shall be tested in accordance with NFPA 289, using the 20 kW ignition source, and shall have a maximum heat release rate of 100 kW.

806.3 Obstruction of means of egress. The required width of any portion of a means of egress shall not be obstructed by decorative vegetation.

806.4 Open flame. Candles and open flames shall not be used on or near decorative vegetation. Natural cut trees shall be kept a distance from heat vents and any open flame or heat-producing devices at least equal to the height of the tree.

806.5 Electrical fixtures and wiring. The use of unlisted electrical wiring and lighting on natural cut trees and artificial decorative vegetation shall be prohibited. The use of electrical wiring and lighting on artificial trees constructed entirely of metal shall be prohibited.

For more information, email the Minnesota State Fire Marshal Division Fire Code Team at firecode@state.mn.us or visit our website.