



SAN RAMON VALLEY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
OPERATIONS SUPPORT SERVICES
3280 Crow Canyon Road, San Ramon, CA 94583

Display of Decorative Materials in School Facilities

1. Purpose:

- a. To ensure compliance with California Fire Code requirements for the display of decorative materials in classrooms and schools.
- b. To establish requirements to ensure a fire-safe work and learning environment for staff and students and to reduce the risk of property damage to district facilities.

2. Definitions and Exceptions:

- a. Decorative Materials: All combustible materials intended to be attached to walls or suspended or displayed within a classroom or school facility. This includes materials made of paper, fabric, foam, plastic or natural vegetation such as straw, hay, leaves, moss, branches, vines and trees. In school facilities these materials are often used in display of student work or instructional materials, decorations or room accessories such as curtains, drapes or partitions.
- b. Flame Retardant Criteria, NFPA 701: Combustible materials that have been commercially treated with an approved flame retardant. Documentation of treatment is required. Treated with a Flame Retardant does not mean that the materials will not burn, only that they are going to spread flames relatively slowly. Note: Not all combustible materials can be successfully treated with a flame retardant.
- c. Exception #1: Decorative Materials as defined above, do not include floor coverings, ordinary window shades, interior finish and materials 0.025 inch (0.64 mm) or less in thickness applied directly to and adhering tightly to a substrate (wall, floor, ceiling or other surface).

- d. Exception #2: Living plants and freshly cut holiday trees are considered flame retardant as long as they are not allowed to dry out. **Natural cut holiday trees are not allowed in school buildings that do not have fire sprinkler protection.**

3. Requirements for Display of Decorative Materials:

- a. Ordinary untreated paper or treated paper (colored or uncolored), 0.025 inch (0.64 mm) or less in thickness, may be displayed on walls as long as it is applied directly to and adhering tightly to the wall or surface. This means it may not protrude or curl away from the wall or surface that it is attached to.
- b. With the exception of requirement 2(d) and 3(a) above, decorative materials not commercially treated with a flame retardant as specified in NFPA 701, may not be attached to walls or suspended or displayed within a school facility. Note: Not all combustible decorative materials can be successfully treated with a flame retardant.
- c. With the exception of requirement 3(a) above, decorative materials, commercially treated with a flame retardant as specified in NFPA 701, may be attached to walls or suspended or displayed within a classroom or school facility but the display is limited to a maximum of 10% of the total wall or ceiling area of the display space under consideration. Note: Excessive suspended decorative materials increases the risk of flame spread within a classroom or exit corridor.
- d. In Exit Corridors: Decorative materials approved for display (with exception of 3(a) above) may never exceed 10% of an exit corridor's wall surface under consideration.
- e. Decorative materials cannot be displayed on or attached to exit doors or in exit stairwells.
- f. Decorative materials cannot be attached to or suspended from any component of a fire sprinkler system or obstruct sprinkler coverage in any way.
- g. Decorative materials cannot obstruct fire extinguishers, alarm pull stations or fire alarm/strobe devices.
- h. Decorative materials cannot cover or obstruct access to electrical panels, outlets and switches.



This is an acceptable display meeting the requirements of 3(a). Paper is .025 inches thick or less and is secured flat up against the wall. It does not protrude or curl away from the wall.



This would not be an acceptable display under 3(a) as the decorations protrude away from the wall. Even if the material was treated with a fire retardant, this display would exceed the maximum 10% limit of the display area as per 3(c).



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Untreated fabric curtains, drapes, quilts or backdrops are not allowed in school buildings.



Decorative paper trees or suspended artwork constructed with paper not commercially treated with a flame retardant are not allowed in school buildings. If constructed with flame retardant paper, display must not be considered excessive and display by an EXIT is not recommended. Excessive displays increase the risk of flame spread and lack of fire sprinkler protection must also be considered.



Panels, partitions or free-standing walls constructed of combustible materials not commercially treated with a fire retardant are not allowed in school buildings.



Decorative materials or paper must not be placed on EXIT doors, in exit stairwells, over fire alarms, over electrical panels, outlets or switches.