

THE FERGUSON LIBRARY HOLIDAY DECORATIONS POLICY

Throughout the year, a number of cultural and religious days of significance are observed. While they are cause for celebration, they are also occasions to be mindful and respectful of the rich and diverse cultures that are ever present in our workplace and the communities we serve.

HOLIDAY DECORATIONS

In accordance with federal guidelines, display of holiday decorations is dependent upon whether the space is public or whether it is a shared or private workspace. In all cases, holiday decorations should be respectful and sensitive of employees and the public.

Public Workspace: A public workspace is any space by which the public has physical or visual access that is not a private workspace. For example, lobbies, reception areas, public service desks, meeting rooms, hallways, or exteriors of buildings.

In a public workspace, only secular holiday decorations may be displayed. Secular holiday decorations include things like tinsel or garland, snowmen, candy canes, reindeer, etc. Seasonal plants/flora and greenery can be displayed indoors and outside. Trees or wreaths can be displayed in public areas. The Supreme Court determined in *County of Allegheny v. ACLU Greater Pittsburgh Chapter*, 492 U.S. 573 (1989) that trees and wreaths are secular symbols. Decorations on the tree or wreath should be secular in nature.

Religious symbols or holiday decorations with religious content may not be displayed.

Private Workspace: A workspace that is assigned exclusively to one employee, such as a cubicle, desk or office that may be seen occasionally by coworkers but not by clients, customers, or the general public.

In a private workspace, an employee may display holiday decorations with religious content or secular decorations.

Shared Workspace: A shared workspace is used or shared by employees, such as copy rooms, conference rooms, shared offices, bathrooms or break areas.

In a shared workspace, only secular holiday decorations may be displayed. Holiday decorations with religious content cannot be displayed.

HOLIDAY PARTIES

Attendance at holiday activities, such as luncheons, potlucks or gift exchanges should be voluntary. An employee's decision not to participate should be respected. To create a more inclusive work environment, plan a means to share and learn about different cultural traditions during the holiday season.

PROMOTING AN INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT

1. Identify a period of time before and after holidays for decorations to be put up and taken down.
2. Designate a common area to share various holidays and cultures, by displaying educational materials on occasions of significance during the winter.
3. Use a multicultural calendar to assist in planning events.
4. Invite staff to participate and share information or items at holiday gatherings that reflect their personal cultural traditions or beliefs.
5. Respect an employee's decision not to participate in a holiday luncheon or other celebration.