



Decorations and Costumes in Healthcare Settings

Site Applicability

All Providence Health Care (PHC) sites

Practice Level

All PHC staff

Need to Know

Purpose:

To provide guidance on infection prevention and control implications for decorations and wearing costumes in PHC settings.

Background:

Decorating for holidays and celebrations can lift the moods and spirit of patients, residents, staff, and visitors. Safety must be considered when decorating.

Guideline

Decorations

1. Selection

- Choose decorations that are easily cleanable.
- Discard decorations that are damaged or visibly soiled.
- Select items that are not breakable and do not shed, e.g. tinsel.
- Select only artificial Christmas trees.
- Avoid fresh or edible decorations or arrangements (e.g. Popcorn strings, Pumpkins for carving etc.)

2. Display/Placement

- Perform hand hygiene before and after handling decorations.
- Ceiling tiles are not to be lifted or compromised in order to hang decorations; do not hang on fire sprinklers and smoke detectors.
- Decorations must not interfere with cleaning and disinfecting of an area, e.g. horizontal surfaces and floors.
- Decorations must not contribute to clutter.



- Please ensure that counters and flat surfaces are clear for cleaning purposes and that decorations do not impede traffic or workflows.
- Wall mounted decorations and window decals are preferred.
- Avoid the use of tape to secure decorations, as this will leave a residue and compromises cleaning when the decoration is removed.
 - Explore alternate methods such as Command strips or mounting putty.
- Decorations are not permitted in the following areas:
 - Clean and soiled utility rooms
 - Medication rooms
 - Work station on wheels or other patient care equipment
 - Treatment/procedure rooms
 - Sterile reprocessing areas or an area used for storing sterile supplies
 - Operating theaters or semi-restricted areas
- In the event of an infectious disease outbreak and following a risk assessment, decorations may need to be removed and/or discarded if they cannot be cleaned and disinfected.
- Decorations should be displayed and removed in a timely manner to prevent dust buildup.

3. Storage

- Decorations should be stored in a lidded plastic container to minimize dust accumulation (e.g., artificial Christmas trees).
- Decorations should be cleaned, disinfected, and dust-free prior to being stored.
- Wipe with a hospital-grade cleaning and disinfection wipe to aid in dust removal prior to storage and again when displayed.

Costumes and other holiday apparel (e.g. Santa, Halloween, Super Heroes, etc.)

- Staff should adhere to the [PHC Professional Image policy](#).
- Costumes worn by staff must still permit good hand hygiene practices.
- Costumes must not impede donning and doffing of PPE.
- PPE may not be altered.

Related Documents

- [B-00-11-10191](#) – Hand Hygiene (Policy)
- [B-00-11-10153](#) – Professional Image (Policy)



References

- BCCDC. (2021). COVID-19 Infection Prevention and Control: Guidance for Acute Health-care Settings. Available from http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Professionals-Site/Documents/COVID19_IPCGuidance_AcuteCare.pdf
- BCCDC. (2022). COVID-19 Infection Prevention and Control: Guidance for Long Term Care and Seniors' Assisted Living Settings. Available from http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Info-Site/Documents/COVID19_LongTermCareAssistedLiving.pdf
- Vancouver Coastal Health. (2022). Decorations, Costumes, Food, Celebrations, & Donations. Available from http://ipac.vch.ca/Documents/Acute%20Resource%20manual/Guidelines_Decorations_Costumes_Food_Celebrations_Donations.pdf



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