



THE BOSTON FIRE PREVENTION CODE
ARTICLE IX
DECORATIONS, FURNISHINGS, AND INTERIOR FINISHES

Section 9.01 – Definitions

- (a) “Decorations” shall mean items which contain flammable and combustible materials and materials which readily undergo thermal degradation, yielding flammable and combustible gasses or vapors or irritating and toxic smoke, and which are used for decorative purposes such as curtains, drapes, upholstery coverings, streamers, banners, coverings over interior finish, and other items identified as subject to this article.
- (b) “Furnishings” shall mean items which contain flammable and combustible materials and materials which readily undergo thermal degradation, yielding flammable and combustible gasses or vapors or irritating and toxic smoke, and which are used as articles of furniture including but not limited to upholstered chairs and couches, solid plastic seating, space separating panels, wall- and ceiling-mounted acoustical devices, and articles which are constructed with foamed cellular plastic in the form of finished exterior or upholstery padding. Bedding including mattresses may be subject to regulation under this article.
- (c) “Interior finishes” means the exposed interior surfaces of buildings including but not limited to fixed or movable walls and partitions, certain wall coverings, columns, ceilings, and certain floor coverings.

Section 9.02 – Permit Required

- (a) A permit shall be obtained for use of decorations, furnishings, and interior finishes in every mercantile, business, assembly, institutional, and residential hotel occupancy and in certain residential multifamily dwellings as designated by the Head of the Fire Department.
- (b) A permit applicant shall furnish information as to the occupancy and location where such decorations, furnishings, and interior finishes will be used and such other information as the Fire Marshal may require, including sample materials for testing by the Fire Department Chemist.

Section 9.03 – General Requirements

- (a) Furnishing, decorations, or other objects shall not be so placed as to obstruct the use of an exit, exit access, or exit discharge.
- (b) Decorations, including hangings, draperies, and mirrors, shall not be placed over exit doors.
- (c) The Head of the Fire Department may prohibit the use of decorations, furnishings, and interior finishes which, on the basis of material analysis, burning, smokeproducing characteristics, or other applicable data, are judged to constitute a fire hazard.
- (d) Furnishings or decorations of an explosive or highly flammable character shall not be used.
- (e) Decorations, furnishings and interior finishes composed of cellular and foam plastic materials may be prohibited when their use is determined to constitute a fire hazard by the Head of the Fire Department.
- (f) Furnishings, decorations, and interior finishes acceptable for use shall meet the

criteria for resistance to ignition, flame spread, heat release potential, and smoke-producing characteristics for particular occupancies and locations as specified in applicable Fire Prevention Orders issued by the Head of the Fire Department.
(g) Fire Prevention Orders for the control of interior finishes shall be consistent with applicable requirements of the Massachusetts State Building Code.

Section 9.04 – Classification

(a) The Fire Department Chemist shall classify decorations, furnishings, and interior finishes as acceptable or not acceptable for use at locations and occupancies for which a permit for the use of decorations, furnishings, or interior finishes is required. The classification determined by the Fire Department Chemist shall be stated in a report to the Fire Marshal which shall include terms and conditions for the maintenance of acceptability or the use of the decoration, furnishings, and interior finishes at a location for which a permit is required.

(b) Classification of decorations, furnishings, and interior finishes shall be of the finished item or material, in a state in which it will be installed or used.

(c) The Fire Department Chemist shall make examinations and tests of decorations, furnishings, and interior finishes in accordance with applicable law, regulations, ordinances, approved reference standards, and applicable Fire Prevention Orders. He shall determine the number of tests to be performed on any material under these provisions, the size of the samples of the material to be tested, and the acceptability of the test methods employed.

(d) The Fire Department Chemist may classify as not acceptable any decorations, furnishings, or interior finishes, the materials of which possess characteristics of reactivity which may be excessively dangerous, other characteristics which may be excessively dangerous, or characteristics which could produce smoke in such amounts as to obscure means of egress whether or not such characteristics are revealed by the specific examinations or tests made.

(e) The Fire Department Chemist may accept the reports of laboratories or testing agencies which have an established procedure for examinations and testing of the materials involved in decorations, furnishings, and interior finishes. He may require that said laboratories or qualified testing agencies show that they have the necessary facilities and qualified personnel for examinations and test for the particular materials.

(f) For materials which depend on a fire retardant treatment to meet the required classification tests, the Fire Department Chemist may issue an acceptable classification when he has satisfactory evidence that the service life of the fire retardant treatment exceeds that of the planned service life of the finished item. He may also issue an acceptable classification on the basis of restrictions imposed regarding a requirement that permanence of flame retardant treatment be demonstrated after cleaning or extended duration of use.