Clark-Cowlitz FIRE RESCUE	Fire Code Standard Display of Combustible Materials in Schools	
	Date: 12/30/2020	Number: 8-1

Purpose

This Information Bulletin is a summary of Clark-Cowlitz Fire Rescue interpretations of City and State Codes. Information contained herein applies to typical instances and may not address all individual circumstances. This Information Bulletin is being provided in order to establish clear policy with respect to the identification of premises.

The Washington State Fire Code (WSFC) Section 807, DECORATIVE MATERIALS 807.5.2 requires that artwork and teaching materials in school corridors shall be limited to not more than 20 percent of the wall area.

WSFC Section 104 GENERAL AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITIES – 104.1 gives the fire code official authority to render interpretations of this code, and to adopt policies, procedures, rules and regulations in order to clarify the applications of its provisions.

Because IFC Section 807 DECORATIVE MATERIALS – 807.5.2 is not detailed enough in addressing the manner in which artwork and teaching materials are displayed inside of classrooms and common areas, the Fire Marshal has developed the following policy for display of combustible artwork and teaching materials in educational occupancies, based on NFPA 101 and the WSFC. This policy does not apply to administrative or support areas.

1. **Classrooms in Sprinklered Buildings**
   Combustible materials used for display shall be flush against the wall and no more than three layers in thickness. Combustible materials displayed shall not exceed 50 percent of the total wall area. When determining wall areas, door and window openings shall be included.

   Obstruction of fire protection equipment shall not be permitted.

   Exception 1: Exit signage, emergency information kits and other required occupant safety materials.

   Exception 2: Combustible materials displayed in fully enclosed viewing cabinets with glass or polycarbonate viewing panels, or covered with glass or polycarbonate sheet material.

2. **Classrooms in Un-sprinklered Buildings**
   Combustible materials used for display shall be flush against the wall and no more than three layers in thickness. Such materials shall not be placed within five (5) feet of a required exit door.

Combustible materials displayed shall not exceed 20 percent of the total wall area. When determining wall areas, door and window openings shall be included.

Exception 1: Exit signage, emergency information kits and other required occupant safety materials.

Exception 2: Combustible materials displayed in fully enclosed viewing cabinets with glass or polycarbonate viewing panels, or covered with glass or polycarbonate sheet material.

Exception 3: Combustible materials displayed may cover up to 50 percent of the total wall area in classrooms that have a door exiting directly to the exterior of the building AND an approved smoke detection system. Combustible materials shall not be placed within five (5) feet of a required exit door.

3. **Required Classroom Exit Doors**

Combustible materials displayed shall not exceed 10 percent of the total door area.

Exception: Window coverings used in lock-down drills and events.

4. **Classroom Ceilings**

Combustible materials displayed shall not be placed against the ceiling. The use of paper chains, clotheslines, streamers and similar spanning decorations shall not be permitted. Combustible materials hung from the ceiling must meet the following:

a) Do not obstruct the visibility of a required exit door or exit sign
b) Do not hang from sprinkler heads, piping, light fixtures or other equipment
c) Located at least 18 inches below bottom of sprinkler heads
d) Individual size does not exceed 8 ½" by 11"
e) No more than fifteen (15) items are hanging at any one time
f) Do not hang within five feet of a required exit door

5. **3-D Decorations**

Combustible "tunnels", "caves", "jungles" or similar constructions shall not be placed within ten feet of a required exit door and shall be made of inherently fire resistive materials. Locally fire retardant treated 3D decorations shall not be permitted; (For example: locally fire retardant treated paper).

6. **Exit Access Passageways, Assembly Areas and Corridors (Common Areas)**

Combustible materials displayed shall not exceed 20 percent of the surface area of any wall.

Combustible materials shall be positioned in such a manner to avoid concentration of materials to reduce flame spread in the event of a fire.

In no event shall any one grouping exceed a maximum horizontal measurement of 12 feet and a maximum vertical measurement of 6 feet.

Groups of combustible materials shall be allowed as long as there is space between each group equal to at least half of the horizontal width of the largest adjacent group.

Combustible materials used for display shall be flush against the wall with no projections, and no more than three layers in thickness. Such materials shall not be placed within five (5) feet of a required exit door.

Exception 1: Exit signage, emergency information kits and other required occupant safety materials.
Exception 2: Combustible materials displayed in fully enclosed viewing cabinets with glass or polycarbonate viewing panels, or covered with glass or polycarbonate sheet material.
Exception 3: Election materials required by law to be posted during any local, state or federal election.

6.1 Common area required exit doors.
Combustible materials displayed shall not exceed 10 percent of the total door area.

6.2 Common area ceilings.
Combustible materials shall not be hung from the ceilings in exit access passageways, assembly areas and corridors.

6.3 **Exits and enclosed exit stairs.**
Combustible materials shall not be displayed in exits and enclosed exit stairs.

Combustible decorative materials (such as curtains, draperies, fabric hangings and other similar decorative material) shall comply with IFC section 807 – DECORATIVE MATERIALS.

The Fire Marshal or his/her designee may authorize limited or temporary deviation from this policy.