

December 2021

## CLASSROOM DOOR DECORATING CONTESTS

### Background

Door decorating contests have been used as popular activities to celebrate a changing season, upcoming holiday or awareness month. As with all traditions and spirit events, schools must prioritize the safety and security of its community while fostering a positive school climate. Here are some risk management recommendations that can begin to help you plan a safe event.

### Recommendations

Consider the following:

- Consulting with the local Fire Marshal to ensure compliance with NFPA 101 Fire Life Safety Code. Also, consider only allowing fire-retardant materials to be used as decorations.
  - *“Artwork and teaching materials shall be permitted to be attached directly to the walls in accordance with the following:*
    - ▶ *The artwork and teaching materials shall not exceed 20 percent of the wall area in a building that is not protected throughout by an approved automatic sprinkler system in accordance with Section 9.7.*
    - ▶ *The artwork and teaching materials shall not exceed 50 percent of the wall area in a building that is protected throughout by an approved automatic sprinkler system in accordance with Section 9.7.” [Chapter 15.7.4.3]*
- Not blocking the door’s locking mechanism, per recommendations contained in the Report of the School Safety Infrastructure Council (re-approved on December 21, 2018):
  - *“All classroom doors shall be lockable ...” [Section 6.13] and “classroom door locks shall be easy to lock...” [Section 6.15]*
- Keeping classroom doors in the ready position; that is, ensuring that the door handle is locked from the hallway side at all times.
- Not blocking the room number with decorations.
- Ensuring that the decorations do not prevent the classroom door from being properly latched.
- Ensuring that the classroom’s egress route is not inadvertently blocked by decorations.
  - According to the National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities (NCEF), a school door must be able to control entry, yet provide easy egress access in case of emergencies.
- Limiting the use of target identifiers as door decorations.
  - A **target identifier** can be a person’s name or picture. Simply, these identifiers notify bad actors where potential targets may be in or around the school campus.
- Not utilizing devices designed to prop open doors or extension cords as a substitute for direct wiring (**OSHA 29 CFR 1910.305(g)(1)(iv)(A)**).

For more information on this topic, please contact your CIRMA Risk Management Consultant. Please visit our training and education program page at [CIRMA.org](http://CIRMA.org) for our current training schedule.