

Seasonal Decorations, Costumes and Celebrations Information Sheet

Note: This information sheet was developed to provide IPC guidance on seasonal decorations and costumes in all healthcare facilities. If you have any questions or comments regarding this information sheet contact Infection Prevention & Control at ipcsurvstdadmin@ahs.ca.

Best practice recommendations

Selecting decorations

- When removing from storage ensure that the outside of the cleanable container is cleaned **prior** to moving it into a patient care area.
- **Do not** move décor contaminated with dust or those that cannot be cleaned into patient care areas.
- Discard damaged or visibly soiled décor.
- Ensure décor does not elicit hand contact; use décor for viewing, not touching.
- Donated decorations may only be accepted if they meet these guidelines and the site/unit is able to accommodate them.

Placing decorations

- Follow Fire & Life Safety recommendations for all decorations. Guidance information is available on Insite for all AHS facilities
- Decorations are to be handled only by healthcare providers or others (e.g., volunteers) under healthcare provider supervision.
- Low to no-touch decorations (i.e., wall decorations, wreaths, Christmas trees, posters) are the preferred seasonal and holiday decorations.
- Do not place decorations on high touch or regularly cleaned surfaces (such as hand rails). Do not decorate the workstations on wheels or other mobile electronic devices.
- Decorations should not interfere with regular clinical or housekeeping duties and are not to obstruct clinical signs, access to personal protective equipment or hand hygiene locations.
- High touch or tactile decorations should be avoided. If they must be used, these should be wipeable with someone assigned to clean regularly. Cleaning is a shared responsibility between unit staff, environmental services and others. If non-wipeable, remove these decorations.
- Decorations are best in locations out of public reach or under continuous view of staff to monitor for any handling concerns. If there are handling concerns, move decorations out of public reach or remove decorations.
- Any decorations affixed to walls or windows, including wall stickers and “klings,” must not damage the paint or other finishes.
- At the end of the season, when decorations are returned to storage, place inside a closed and wipeable bin or bag (i.e., plastic container or tote) to ensure protection from dust and other contamination.

Costumes

- Costumes may be worn, if appropriate to the care setting and patients.
- Costumes must not interfere with hand hygiene or use of personal protective equipment.
- Headgear, wigs, hair or other costume elements must not have contact with patients when performing tasks including bending, transferring and assisting with meals.
- Costumes and footwear must be clean.

For more information contact
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Celebrations

All Alberta Government restrictions regarding gatherings and celebrations must be followed <https://www.alberta.ca/restrictions-on-gatherings.aspx> in addition, Workplace Health and Safety (WHS) Nutrition Food Linen Environmental Services (NFLES) and Environmental Public Health (EPH) have indicated the following during COVID-19 pandemic:

1. Workplace or staff celebrations

- AHS staff must not accept donated food for personal consumption and/or distribute donated food to other AHS staff.
- AHS staff may bring food from home or other external sources (e.g., restaurant take-out) for personal consumption.
- AHS staff may have external food delivered (e.g., pizza) for personal consumption.
- Staff need to determine how to safely obtain the food from the delivery service, considering current site visitor restrictions.
- Staff shall not share food or beverages. All Albertans are discouraged from sharing food or beverages at this time.
- AHS management shall not be arranging or supporting group food events e.g., unit potlucks and should post the [Physical Distancing Poster](#) in all staff break, lounge or eating areas.
- With respect to break rooms and common areas where food and beverages may be consumed:
 - Each staff member must perform hand hygiene before and after eating.
 - As masks cannot be worn while eating or drinking, physical distancing of 2 meters must be maintained.
 - Stagger eating times or locations as required to maintain physical distancing.

2. Patient, family and visitor celebrations

- All visitor restrictions apply <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/topics/Page17001.aspx>.
- Follow [EPH guidelines](#) on bringing food for patients.
- In situations where site NFLES cannot meet the patient's requests, site and unit management should continue wherever operationally feasible, to support family bringing external food for patients.
- **Note** the following additional considerations:
 - Site/unit staff need to determine how to get the food from the family to the patient, considering current site visitor restrictions and usual safe food handling practices.
 - Instruct families to check with site or unit management as to their capacity to receive deliveries and if a delivery can be coordinated. If they cannot, then a delivery should not occur. If they can, then work with the site or unit to arrange a time and place for the delivery to occur.
 - Any delivery needs to be in clean packaging and arranged prior with the site.
 - Deliveries are to be for an individual patient and labelled with the patient's name.
 - Sites are unable to accommodate visitors dining with patients inside healthcare facilities.