



## **Yakima County Fire Marshal's Office**

### **Public Information Handout FP-10**

### **Teaching & Decorative Materials in Educational Occupancies**



## **International Fire Code Chapter 8**

The International Fire Code (IFC) has specific criteria that regulate the amount of combustible materials and decorations within corridors, classrooms, high occupancy or vulnerable areas within educational occupancies.

Educational occupancies are (schools) used by six or more persons for educational purposes through the 12th grade, or buildings or structures used for education, supervision, or personal care services for more than five children over the age of 1 1/2 years.

Educational occupancies tend to display various artwork and related educational materials on the walls of corridors and classrooms. Although this practice aids with instruction and learning, it can also pose a fire hazard to the students, teachers, and visitors due to the combustibility of the materials covering the classroom and corridor walls. If a fire occurs, smoke development and rapid-fire growth can prevent safe egress within the classroom and exit corridors.



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### Artwork and Teaching Materials

Combustible artwork and teaching materials are limited on the walls of corridors to not more than 20 percent of the wall area. See Figure below.



Combustible artwork and teaching materials are limited on walls of classrooms to not more than 50 percent of the specific wall area to which they are attached. See Figure below.



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### Exit Doors

Exit doors must be distinguishable so they are easily recognized as exit doors. Furnishings, decorations or other objects shall not be placed so as to obstruct or obscure exits. Hangings and draperies shall not be placed over exit doors or otherwise be located to conceal or obstruct an exit.

Although creative, the decorative wall cover depicted in this classroom photo includes the exit door, which may confuse students, teachers, and visitors from immediately recognizing the exit door, particularly during an emergency



### Curtains and Draperies

Curtains, draperies, hangings, and other decorative materials, suspended from walls and/or ceilings within schools, shall meet the flame propagation performance criteria of NFPA 701 Standard, or be non-combustible.



Curtains, draperies, or hangings shall have a permanently affixed label or a certificate executed by an approved testing laboratory certifying the materials meet the flame propagation criteria of NFPA 701 Standards. Fire-retardant coating in existing building shall be maintained so as to retain the effectiveness of the treatment.

If the items placed on classroom and/or corridor walls or suspended from the ceilings or walls do not have this label or certificate they **MUST** be removed.

If you have any questions or need further clarification, please contact Yakima County Building and Fire Safety at (509) 574-2300.