

## Advice Leaflet 12 Artificial Foliage

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### INTRODUCTION

As there is no specific British Standard for artificial foliage, the Fire Authority will only approve its use in individual circumstances.

Approval will depend on the quantity, the proposed location and the fire test evidence provided for the material.

### TESTING IGNITABILITY

Artificial foliage cannot be assessed in terms of flame-retarded material using formal laboratory test methods. However, it may be subjected to ignition tests using small flaming sources comparable to those used for testing drapes and curtaining, as follows:

A suitable small flaming ignition source, the match equivalent butane flame Ignition Source 1 specified in British Standard 5852: Part 1, should be applied to the treated leaves, flowers etc, of the sample for 20 seconds. Ignition is acceptable during the application of the igniting flame but, on its removal, flaming, whilst continuing locally, should not spread the area first ignited.

The general principles of "*British Standard 476: Part 12: 1991: Method of Test for Ignitability of Products by Direct Flame Impingement*" should be applied.

Tests should include the stems as well as the leaves.

### SAFE LOCATIONS

Each proposed location will be looked at on its own merits and will be accepted or rejected after taking regard of the individual circumstances.

It is difficult to completely inhibit the production of molten droplets or debris from the solid plastic parts of artificial foliage that is on fire. Therefore it is necessary to consider the following factors:

- the location of the material;
- the ease of public access; and
- the quantity of material present.

In large public areas such as shopping malls only certain natural foliage is acceptable unless sprinklers are provided.

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### LICENSED PREMISES

In areas of premises licensed for the sale of liquor or for entertainment or recreational purposes, any artificial foliage or decorations used should be constructed from materials which have passed the BS 5867: Part 2 Type B test, or which have been treated to render them fire retardant to the same standard. The Fire Authority should be provided with evidence of compliance.

Foliage or decorations entirely made of plastic are not normally acceptable in licensed premises.

### GENERAL

Artificial foliage, which is used for decoration in public areas, should preferably be non-combustible or inherently flame retardant or treated to make it flame retardant. Because flame retardant treatments can be adversely affected by contact with moisture (which may cause re-crystallisation on surfaces) materials so treated should be cleaned and re-treated in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. Written evidence of re-treatment should be kept available for inspection by the Fire Authority.

Plant holders and trays should be non-combustible, e.g. concrete, metal etc.

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 requires employers and other responsible persons to make a '**suitable and sufficient**' assessment of the risks from fire in the licensed premises, and how they affect the safety of their employees and other persons who may be on or in the vicinity of the premises. As a result, the above recommendations are very likely to be requirements should they be considered necessary in order to protect the safety of relevant persons.

For further advice regarding fire precautions standards please see the attached guides available from <http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1123799>

[Entry Level Guide - A short guide to making your premises safe from fire](#)

[Guide 6 - Small and medium places of assembly](#)

[Guide 7 - Large places of assembly](#)

[Guide 8 - Theatres and cinemas](#)

[Guide 9 – Open Air Events & Venues](#)