

Subject: ARTWORK AND TEACHING MATERIALS ON SCHOOL WALLS

Reference: NFPA Pamphlet 101; Denver Fire Code (UFC) Number FP - 0015

**Approved: Joseph L. Gonzales, Division Chief, Fire Prevention and Investigation Division
Phil Marin, Inspections Administrator, Building Inspection Division**

This policy is meant to provide basic information for the most common conditions and situations. In any given occupancy, many other Fire and Building Code requirements may be enforced. These will be addressed by the Inspector(s) during a premise inspection. Any questions can be addressed to the Building and Fire Departments Inspection Sections.

Artwork and teaching materials attached directly to the walls of school classrooms and corridors increase the combustible load in the building and can allow flame to spread quickly. Because the combustibility of the artwork is difficult to effectively control, the quality of material, in terms of the percentage of wall area covered, is regulated to avoid creating a continuous combustible surface that will spread flame across the wall.

CLASSROOM WALLS

Artwork and teaching material attached directly to the school classroom walls shall be in accordance with the following provisions:

- **Classroom walls may be used to attach student artwork, other artwork and teaching materials not to exceed forty (40) percent of the total wall area. The total classroom wall area is defined as being the height from the floor to the ceiling multiplied by the length of the wall, excluding door and window openings. Each wall must be calculated on its own (i.e., the allowable area for artwork is not cumulative from one wall to another). Artwork and teaching materials shall not be attached to any wall within three (3) feet of the exit access door. Exterior windows and windows/view panels of interior exit access doors shall not be covered. The use of crepe paper that is not listed a flame-resistant is prohibited.**

The above provisions do not apply to:

- **Building interior finish materials (i.e. metal lockers)**
- **Artwork or teaching materials that are listed as non-combustible**
- **Artwork or teaching materials that are contained within non-combustible containers or coverings (i.e., metal and glass display cases)**

EXIT CORRIDOR WALLS

Exit corridor walls may be used to attach student artwork, other artwork and teaching materials not to exceed twenty (20) percent of the total wall area. The total corridor wall area is defined as being the height from the floor to the ceiling multiplied by the length each wall, excluding door and window openings. Each wall must be calculated on its own (i.e., the allowable area for artwork is not cumulative from one wall to another). Artwork and teaching materials shall not be attached to any wall within three

(3) feet of the exit access door(s). Exterior windows and windows/view panels of interior exit access doors shall not be covered. The use of crepe paper that is not listed as flame-resistant is prohibited.

CEILINGS

Artwork and teaching materials suspended from classroom and exit corridor ceilings shall be in accordance with the following provisions:

- The total area of materials suspended from ceilings shall be deducted from the forty (40) percent of wall space for classrooms and the twenty (20) percent of wall space for exit corridors.**
- Wires or cords used to suspend student artwork and teaching materials from the ceiling cannot be strung from corner to corner and cannot be strung parallel to any wall more than six (6) inches from the wall.**
- Display of student artwork and teaching materials on wires or cords perpendicular to exit corridor walls strung from corridor wall to corridor wall shall not form a continuous combustible curtain. There shall be a minimum clearance of seven (7) feet from the floor to the lowest portion of the display.**
- Display of student artwork and teaching materials shall not impair visibility or detract attention from the exit sign.**
- No material shall be attached to light fixtures, thermal or heat detectors, light fixtures, exit signs or fire sprinkler heads.**
- It is the responsibility of Denver Public Schools Facility Management to ensure that the ceiling structure can support student artwork or teaching materials and that any display of student artwork or teaching materials does not compromise the fire protection and fire alarm and detection systems.**

Safe exit from any school building requires a safe path of escape from the fire environment. The exits of the school are arranged for ready use in case of an emergency and should be sufficient to permit all occupants to reach a safe place. Under no circumstances shall display of artwork and teaching materials interfere with the required width of, or obstruct any portion of, any exit access component.

It shall be the duty and responsibility of principals and teachers to inspect all facilities daily to ensure the provisions of this policy are complied with. Fire or Building Department inspectors who find a school to be in violation will immediately bring the violation to the attention of the school principal. Violations may be directed to be corrected immediately and in no case more than 24 hours following discovery.

Failure to correct the violation within the directed time period may result in the school losing the privilege of displaying student artwork, other artwork and teaching materials in accordance with this policy

APPROVED:

Morgan R. Deane Jr.
Director, Operations & Maintenance

Date


DENVER FIRE DEPARTMENT

INTERNAL CORRESPONDENCE.

MEMORANDUM

January 9, 2003

To: All Institutions Group Members

From: Fred W. Jonke, Captain, Fire Prevention and Investigation 

SUBJECT: DENVER PUBLIC SCHOOLS 60/40 WALL ART

During the past month two issues were brought to my attention concerning the 60/40 wall art policy, to that end the following information is supplied.

The first issue to be addressed will be interpretation of the policy. In the policy under Classroom Walls, subheading 'The above provisions do not apply to:' we will address the second bullet, which reads, Artwork or teaching materials that are listed as non-combustible. Requests were being made to use a 'fire retardant' spray treatment on construction paper; this is unacceptable and shall not be allowed because this does not conform to a non-combustible material as defined in the Uniform Fire Code 1994 edition;

NONCOMBUSTIBLE as applied to building construction material means a material which, in the form in which it is used, is either one of the following:

1. Material of which no part will ignite and burn when subjected to fire. Any material conforming to U.B.C. Standard 2-1 shall be considered non combustible.
2. Material having a structural base of non combustible material as defined in Item 1 above, with a surfacing material not over 1/8 inch (3.2mm) thick which has a flame-spread rating of 50 or less.

"Non combustible" does not apply to surface finish materials. Material required to be noncombustible for reduced clearances to flues; heating appliances or other sources of high temperature shall refer to material conforming to Item 1. No material shall be classed as noncombustible which is subject to increase in combustibility or flame-spread rating, beyond the limits herein established, through the effects of age, moisture or other atmospheric condition.

Flame-spread rating as used herein refers to rating obtained according to tests conducted as specified in U.B.C. Standard 8-1.

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The second issue to be addresses will be the 'Literacy Policy' which dictates that teachers display a certain percentage of various cultural materials.

The Uniform Fire Code dictates that only 20% of the usable classroom wall space can be used to display students' artwork. An agreement was struck between the Denver Fire Department and Denver Public Schools allowing teachers an additional 20% to make conformity to the 'Literacy Policy' easier. Teacher can cover up to 40% of the usable wall space, as defines in the policy.

The school wall art policy shall be strictly adhered to; any displays above the 40% shall be considered a fire code violation and shall be brought to the school principles immediate attention. Violations may be directed to be perform corrections immediately and in no case more that 24 hours following discover. The names of violators shall be without delay forwarded to Michael C. Langley, Executive Director Facility Management for Denver Public Schools.

Thank you for bringing these issues to my attention.

cc: Joe Gonzales, Division Chief, Fire Prevention & Investigation Bureau
Randy Stewart, Assistant Chief, Fire Prevention & Investigation Bureau

DENVER PUBLIC SCHOOLS
INTERDEPARTMENTAL COMMUNICATION

To Area and Assistant Area Superintendents and School Principals
From Jerry Wartgow, Superintendent
Date August 16, 2002
Subject Revised Guidance on Displaying Student Work

In response to requests from teachers and principals, the district has been engaged in ongoing negotiations with the Denver Fire Department (DFD) over the amount of paper that can be hung on the walls of classrooms (the 20 percent rule – see calculation below). I am very pleased that the DFD has agreed to allow a variance to the Fire Code to increase the allowable amount of combustible paper to 40 percent of the defined wall space. See the attached DFD directive.

I want to draw your attention to the final paragraph of this DFD policy, “Failure to correct the violation within the directed time period may result in the *school principal* (emphasis added) receiving a Denver County Court summons.”

Please read the attached directive carefully and be sure that your school is in compliance with the Fire Department’s revised policy. DFD has changed their position substantially in an attempt to accommodate our educational needs, but they will not continue the variance from the code if we do not make a good faith effort to comply.

An example of a wall calculation follows:

You have one classroom wall that is 30 feet long and 8 feet high. This is 240 square feet. There are two doors in the wall at 3 feet wide and 7 feet tall. This reduces the amount of wall space to 198 sq ft. Forty percent of 198 sq ft is 79.2 sq ft. You cannot put paper within three feet of either door. This example would allow a display of material approximately six feet wide and thirteen feet long in the middle of the wall.

Note: Each wall stands on its own and allowable coverage may not be transferred from wall to wall.

Thank you for your attention to this very important matter. If you have any questions please call Risk Management at 303-764-3613.

Attachment



WELLINGTON E. WEBB
Mayor

CITY AND COUNTY OF DENVER

DEPARTMENT OF SAFETY
FIRE DEPARTMENT

FIRE PREVENTION & INVESTIGATION DIVISION
745 WEST COLFAX AVENUE
DENVER, COLORADO 80204
PHONE: (720) 913-3414
FAX: (720) 913-3587
www.denvergov.org/dfd

July 30, 2002

Michael Langley, Executive Director
Department of Facility Management
Denver Public Schools
2800 West 7th Avenue
Denver, CO 80204

Dear Mike:

RE: DISPLAY OF ARTWORK / TEACHING MATERIALS ON SCHOOL WALLS

In response to your inquiry regarding regulations involving attaching artwork and teaching materials on school walls, the attached City and County of Denver policy is attached.

This policy departs from the stringent guidelines of national standards, because we understand the importance and the benefits of displaying students' work. Based on our past working relationship with Denver Public Schools, we are placing much trust in the principals of each school to abide by these guidelines. Failure to stay within the guidelines may result in the suspension of this policy.

If additional information would prove helpful, please contact us.

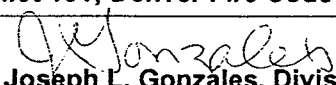
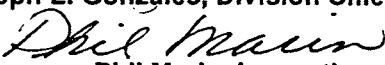
Sincerely,

Joseph L. Gonzales, Division Chief
Fire Prevention and Investigation Division

JLG:ms (DPS - ArtworkMaterials 7-30-02)

Attachment

cc: Charles R. Stewart, Assistant Chief, Fire Prevention and Investigation Division
Fred Jonke, Captain, Fire Prevention and Investigation Division

CITY AND COUNTY OF DENVER	POLICY	DENVER FIRE DEPARTMENT BUILDING INSPECTION DIVISION
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Failure to correct the violation within the directed time period may result in the school principal receiving a Denver County Court summons. Repeat violations may result in the school losing the privilege of displaying student artwork, other artwork and teaching materials in accordance with this policy.

END OF DOCUMENT