



# CITY OF FALLS CHURCH

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## Seasonal Street Tree Lighting Permits

November 16, 2015 through March 23, 2016

Decorative or seasonal lighting in street trees can be an identifying characteristic within business districts in the City of Falls Church, adding interest and vibrancy to the streetscape. Property or business owners, corporations, or associations are allowed to install temporary decorative or seasonal lighting on trees in the public right-of-way, under a Seasonal Tree Lighting Permit (special Right-of-Way Use Permit). In this first year of such permitting, lighting permit fees will be waived.

1. Seasonal tree lighting permits cover the lighting of street trees in business districts only.
2. Only low-voltage decorative lights, such as LED lights, will be allowed.
3. Permit holders shall remove all tree lighting by March 23, 2016.
4. All installation and removal activities shall adhere to the city's traffic requirements, including hours of work and lane closure permits. Standard fees will be charged for lane closure permits if needed.
5. Lights and related components such as attachments and electric cords shall be limited to brown, dark green or black to blend in with the color of the tree bark and branches. The use of white or bright colored cords or attachments is not allowed.
6. City streetlights that have standard electrical outlets may be used as the power source for low-voltage seasonal tree lighting. Before relying on this source, ask the City's Operations Division (703-248-5083) to test the outlet and repair if necessary.
7. Strands must be installed at a height that does not impair or otherwise impede pedestrian traffic. When overhead power lines are present in the tree, the strands shall not overhang sidewalks below 8 feet or travel or parking lanes below 14 feet.
8. The applicant/permit holder is responsible for ensuring that all installations conform to National Electrical Standards and Codes.
9. Pruning of branches to accommodate the installation and removal of lights shall NOT be allowed under the Seasonal Tree Lighting permit.
10. There are three methods of installing strings of lights in trees: draping, tracing, and wrapping. Tree lighting on West Broad Street shall use the wrapping method on the trunks only, and warm white light color.
  - a. Draping: strings of lights are installed along the outside of the tree canopy. Light strings shall be adequately secured to branches one inch in diameter or larger to minimize breakage.
  - b. Tracing: strings of lights are installed along 2-inch diameter or greater tree branches. Attachment points must be spaced at least 18 inches apart.

- c. Wrapping: strings of lights are wound loosely around the trunk or around 2-inch in diameter or greater tree branches.
11. Installation of seasonal lights shall be done in a manner that does not harm the trees.
    - a. All lighting attachments to trees shall be loose (approximately ½ inch gap between the tie and the branch) to prevent bark damage and allow for branch sway during normal wind.
    - b. All material used for attaching lights and wires shall first be approved by the City Arborist. No materials that puncture or damage the bark will be allowed. Under no circumstances shall any part of the lighting system be attached to any part of a tree with wire, duct tape, or masking tape.
    - c. Any parts of tree-lighting systems found by the City to be improperly installed or causing damage to the tree shall be loosened or removed and replaced by the permit holder.
  12. If at any time the lighting devices or their components become a safety hazard, they shall be removed at the expense of the permit holder.
  13. After a major storm event where tree damage may have occurred, the permit holder shall inspect the lights for damage and alert the City Arborist of any tree problems found.
  14. If any trees, tree trunks, branches, or limbs on trees within the right-of-way are cut, pruned, or damaged as the result of the lighting activity, the permit holder shall be assessed for damages per City Code.
  15. The City reserves the right to prune or remove trees to abate potential risk to the public. In the event of an emergency that requires action on trees that contain permitted seasonal lighting, the City will not be held responsible for damages done to the fixtures and associated equipment.

*The City of Falls Church is committed to the letter and spirit of the Americans with Disabilities Act. To request a reasonable accommodation for any type of disability call 703-248-5030. (TTY 771)*

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