

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 1, 2015

Contact: Shannon Widor, OC Public Works
714.667.9759 (w) or 714.438.9707 (cell)
shannon.widor@ocpw.ocgov.com

Celebrating the Holiday Season Safely: Permits Needed for Holiday Displays over Public Roads in Unincorporated Areas

Displays fully contained on private property do not need a permit

OC Public Works is reminding residents in the unincorporated areas of Orange County that they must obtain an "encroachment" permit if they plan to stretch holiday displays, including strings of lights, over public rights of way.

The permit establishes guidelines to ensure public safety and code compliance for homeowner associations and individuals interested in installing holiday displays over public roads, sidewalks, parkways, vegetation along the streets and public light poles. The purpose of the required permit is to ensure that displays over public rights of way are safely positioned, provide adequate clearance for emergency and service vehicles, and are installed with proper electrical connections.

Obtaining an encroachment permit will ensure decorations are displayed in a safe and secure manner for an environment that protects families, property, vehicles and service providers. Please note that electrical wiring, including extension cords, are not allowed across the surface of public sidewalks or roads and are not permitted under an encroachment permit.

A permit is not required for displays fully contained on private property.

"Public safety has always been and continues to be the County's top priority," said Shane Silsby, Director of OC Public Works. "We understand that holiday decorations create a festive atmosphere and help build a strong sense of community spirit. We simply want residents and homeowner groups to decorate safely in or over public areas, and that includes obtaining a permit."

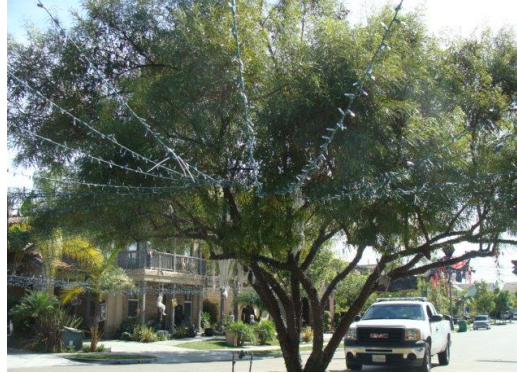
The fee for a permit is \$683, plus payment of a refundable \$1,000 surety deposit, which will be returned if no incidents occur during the display period. A \$1 million insurance policy naming the County of Orange as additional insured also must be obtained.

To help control permit fees incurred by individuals, OC Public Works allows a homeowners association (HOA) to purchase one permit for the entire community. Another option for interested residents is to collectively enlist the services of a contractor to obtain an encroachment permit and install the respective decorations in the public right-of-way area on behalf of those individuals. OC Public Works will coordinate with interested homeowner associations and individuals to provide additional information about the permit process in advance of the holidays.

For more information about this process, residents and HOAs can contact OC Public Works' Development Processing Center at (714) 667-8888 or visit the web site at www.ocplanning.net/permits.

- Example images on next page -

Examples of displays requiring an encroachment permit to ensure compliance with safety guidelines in public areas



Examples of non-compliant use of wiring (including electrical cords) in public areas

