

Curtains and Wall Hangings in Residential Halls FAQs

The College of New Jersey has implemented a policy to be in compliance with the fire standards set forth by the state of New Jersey (N.J.A.C 5:70-3, 807.4). The New Jersey Division of Fire Safety ensures compliance with all New Jersey fire codes as outlined in the National Fire Protection Association through the New Jersey Administrative Code.

1. Why is TCNJ prohibiting wall hangings and tapestries in residential halls?

During recent fire code inspections conducted by the New Jersey Division of Fire Safety (currently carried out by the State of NJ fire marshal), TCNJ received citations for allowing tapestries and wall hangings in residence hall rooms, particularly in areas where students sleep. The fire marshal was unable to determine whether these tapestries/wall hangings were fire-rated or tested. Therefore, in accordance with code site 807.4 in the "fire code book," the fire marshal stated that "any fabric that is not fire-rated or tested cannot be hung from the wall."

Following discussions with the fire marshal, the Ewing Township Fire Department, and other NJ colleges, tapestries and wall hangings are now prohibited from all residence room walls to maximize student safety and prevent additional citations.

2. Whose responsibility is it to enforce the prohibition of tapestries and wall hangings in residence halls?

The College of New Jersey is responsible for enforcing New Jersey fire code laws by complying with notices, violations, and orders from the New Jersey Division of Fire Safety. Failure to address fire code violations within a defined timeframe may result in a monetary fine for the College. TCNJ is obligated to follow the opinions, notices, and applicable state laws of the New Jersey Division of Fire Safety regarding the accepted fire code for the College. The Division of Student Affairs/Department of Residential Education and Housing at TCNJ will enforce the requirement of removing tapestries and wall hangings through student conduct procedures. Failure to abate this safety risk may result in a state imposed fine of \$500.00 per incident and report of violation of residence hall policy.

The Division of Student Affairs/Department of Residential Education and Housing determines the outcomes for violations of its Student Conduct Code and Guide to Residence Living.

The 2024-2025 Guide to Residence Living, coming soon, will reflect our updated position on curtains and wall hangings.

3. Are curtains allowed?

Curtains **are permitted** for hanging on windows and as a covering for a closet with no doors. No fire retardant treatment is required on curtains according to the NJ Division of Fire Safety.

However, curtains **are not permitted** if used to separate two beds for privacy or if hung from the ceiling.

The use of shower curtains and bathroom privacy dividers **are permitted**.