

SPACE HEATERS

Use of Space Heaters

The use of space heaters is not allowed due to risk of fire and concerns for energy consumption. Space heaters create an energy drain because the heat produced in one area upsets normal operation of building HVAC systems causing uncomfortable conditions for others.

In 2005, the Department of Administration issued guidelines related to temperature, humidity, hours of operation and other variables that affect energy usage. The main focus of the regulations is thermostat settings, which will be 68 degrees in the winter (60 degrees during unoccupied hours) and 76 degrees in the summer. The regulations also require that room lights and office equipment be turned off when not in use and prohibits the use of space heaters and fans.

Extenuating circumstances such as health, regulatory and research requirements may necessitate an exemption from the temperatures set forth in the regulations. The reason for the exemption will need to be documented. For example, if there is a medical reason, a document from a medical provider may be necessary.

In the event an exemption, only space heaters meeting the following criteria are permitted:

- The heater must be electrically powered and listed by Underwriters Laboratories (UL) or approved by Factory Mutual Insurance Company (FM). Tags or labels indicating the device has been tested and approved by either of these agencies can be found on the electrical cord or die stamped on the heater itself.
- Fuel powered propane and kerosene space heaters are not permitted.
- The heater must have a thermostat for heat regulation. The heater's thermostat will sense that the area has reached a certain temperature and reduce heating until the temperature in the area drops (very much like the thermostat in your house).
- Heaters without thermostats (with simple "on/off" or "high/low" switches), which continue to heat without any regulation and can easily cause fires, are not permitted.
- Approved heaters must be fan driven. Space heaters with heated metal coils are not permitted. A guard or screen must cover the heating element.

- Space heaters must have a tip-over shutdown feature. If the heater is knocked over, the unit must automatically shut off.

Approved space heaters may be used only if the following conditions are met:

- The heater may only be located on the floor. Heaters located on filing cabinets, tables, desks or equipment are more susceptible to being knocked over, resulting in accidents or fires. Never place anything on top of a space heater.
- At least 3 feet of clearance must be maintained around the heater at all times. Combustible materials like paper, plastic and cloth must be kept away from the heater.
- Electric cords must be kept out of foot traffic paths to prevent tripping. Extension cords are not allowed.
- Heaters must be plugged directly into a wall receptacle. The heater must be unplugged, not just turned off, any time the room or area being heated is unoccupied, especially at the end of the workday.
- Heaters may not be used in areas where flammable liquids are in use or stored.
- Space heaters are not allowed in the Residence Halls.

Facilities Management and Safety-Risk Management reserve the right to inspect and approve or reject any space heater that creates a hazard or is inappropriate to a particular location based on specific circumstances and/or fire safety requirements.

References: various sources

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