

UNIVERSITY OF TOLEDO

SUBJECT: PORTABLE SPACE HEATERS

Procedure No: S-08-009

PROCEEDURE STATEMENT

The use of portable space heaters is prohibited in all clinical buildings, residence halls and laboratories. Exceptions, with special permission of the Safety and Health Department, may be made for other campus buildings. The Safety and Health Department reserves the right to prohibit the use of space when the presence of certain combustible or flammable materials may warrant their removal.

PURPOSE OF PROCEDURE

To ensure the protection of patients, staff, students and visitors from the hazards associated with the use of portable heating devices.

PROCEDURE

Due to possible fire and life safety hazards, the Fire Marshal has generally recommended portable space heaters not be used in any campus building. In the event a heating system fails, or there is inadequate heat to an area, every effort should be made to correct the problem before using any temporary or portable heat source. These units can be unsafe and costly to operate. Reports of heating problems should be directed to Plant Operations at x1000 on the Main Campus, and Facilities Maintenance at x5353 on the Health Science Campus.

General Requirements for all Space Heaters

Depending on type and conditions of use, space heaters can present serious fire hazards and also compete with essential equipment for available electric power. Whenever the use of a portable heater causes tripping of circuit breakers or affects computers or other office equipment performance, the further use of that heater is prohibited.

The use of extension cords is restricted by the National Electrical Code. Space heaters must be plugged directly into a wall outlet or (if permitted by the manufacturer's specifications) a circuit breaker protected UL power strip used in accordance with its listing and the electrical code.

Space heaters of the types described below are the only acceptable units when used as specified and only in non-residence, non-clinical and non-laboratory buildings.

Liquid Filled Space Heaters

Should the use of a portable heater be necessary, liquid filled heaters are acceptable subject to all general requirements and specific safety requirements being met. Such heaters, if equipped with foot pegs or wheels, can be placed directly on the floor, but not less than one foot from combustible material (not including carpet on the floor).

Radiant Panel Heaters

Radiant panel electric low wattage heaters are preferred when portable temporary heat is necessary. They generally use less than 200 watts of electricity and will not be hot to the touch. They can be safely used beneath a desk.

All other portable heater types are prohibited on campus, and if used at home we recommend the unit be:

- Placed at least three feet away from furniture, walls, wastebaskets, and all other flammable materials which may ignite upon exposure to high temperatures.
- Placed on a UL approved stove board (available at local heating centers), or on a non-combustible material (ceramic tile, metal, etc.) at least equal in size to the heater.
- Equipped with tip-over protection.

Remember to:

- Unplug the unit when leaving the room for longer than 15 minutes.

- Inspect the cord frequently for cracks, hot spots, or signs of wear

Exceptions to this procedure shall only be granted in emergency situations where building heat is temporarily interrupted. Such usage shall be approved by a Director of Safety and Health or by Facilities Maintenance if Life Safety requirements can be met.

Source: Safety & Health Committee

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