

Space Heaters in University Buildings

Use of space
heaters
discouraged

The Fire Prevention Division of the Office of Environment, Health & Safety discourages University employees from using space heaters in their workplaces because of fire risks.

Space heaters are prohibited in student residence sleeping units.

Campus employees whose workplaces are too cold should contact the Physical Plant—Campus Services (PP-CS) customer service desk (642-1032) for help with adjusting the temperature. If PP-CS personnel can find no other way to make the work area more comfortable, space heaters may be necessary.

Fire prevention
guidelines

Propane, kerosene, and solid fuel portable space heaters are prohibited. Only electric space heaters may be used in workplaces, and only when the following safety rules are followed:

Use:

- Always read and follow the manufacturers' operating instructions before operating the heater.
- Always turn off the heater or unplug it when you leave the office for an extended period (i.e., for a meeting, for lunch, and at the end of the day).
- The heater must be the grounded type and have a cord with a three-prong plug. It must have the Underwriters Laboratories (UL) listing mark.
- The heater must shut off automatically when it is tipped forward or backward.
- The heater must be clean and not covered with dust. The cord must be in good condition and not frayed.

Placement:

- Do not use where flammable or explosive vapors or dust may be present. Do not use where toxic or radioactive materials may be present.
- Do not place a heater near combustible materials such as papers, magazines, drapes, or office furniture. Follow manufacturer guidelines for placement of the heater. If you do not have these guidelines, be sure to provide at least 36 inches of clearance in front of the heater and 18 inches clearance around the sides and back.
- Do not plug a heater into an extension cord or power strip. It should be plugged directly into a permanent wall outlet.
- Never run a power cord under a carpet or floor mat.

Questions regarding this policy may be directed to Environment, Health & Safety, Fire Prevention Division, 642-3073.

