

PORTABLE HEATER SAFETY

Portable heating devices, also known as space heaters, are small electric appliances designed to provide warmth in rooms or specific areas that are cold as a result of inadequate heating.

Facilities Management and Environmental Health, Safety & Risk Management (EHSRM) discourage the use of these devices for safety and environmental control reasons. They should only be used as a last resort for temperature control. If a temperature discrepancy exists, customers should contact Facilities Management and inform the office of the situation.

Portable heaters can pose a fire safety hazard and are prohibited in residential housing rooms, laboratories, or areas where chemicals or combustible materials are stored. Every portable heater must meet these requirements:

- Is electrically powered, UL or FM approved, and labeled accordingly.
- Contains a sealed element and does not produce flames, fumes or use any fuel.
- Has a thermostat that shuts the device off when a certain temperature is reached.
- Is equipped to turn off automatically when tilted or turned over.

All faculty, staff, students and contractors are required to comply with the following portable heater guidelines:

- You must turn off and unplug the heater when not in use.
- Never leave the heater “ON” while unattended.
- Always plug the heater directly into a wall receptacle when in use. Do not operate if the electrical cord is damaged or if the plug is missing the grounding pin.
- Never plug the heater into an extension cord because it may overheat and cause a fire.
- Maintain a clear area of at least 3 feet in all directions of the heater.
- Keep in good working condition and immediately remove if damaged or defective.
- Read and follow the manufacturer’s operating instructions.
- Promptly report any unsafe or hazardous conditions to EHSRM.

Periodic monitoring will be conducted by EHSRM to ensure portable heaters are being properly used and are designed to comply with the safety guidelines listed above. Devices not meeting these requirements shall be disposed of or removed from university property.

