



Portable Electric Space Heating Devices

Portable space heaters can pose a major workplace fire safety hazard. Use of unapproved or unsafe space heaters – or use of space heaters in an unsafe manner – presents a significant fire risk. All faculty, staff, students and visitors are required to comply with the following requirements, which are detailed in the Fire and Life Safety Compliance Guide in accordance with the UMDNJ Fire and Life Safety Policy.

The use of portable space heaters is permitted under certain circumstances in University-owned and leased facilities, provided its use is in an approved area and the space heater complies with certain safety requirements. This fact sheet provides a brief guideline regarding the use of portable space heaters in University-owned or leased facilities.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Q: *When is a portable space heater permitted?*

A: A portable space heater is permitted when the University's Physical Plant Department or the landlord of a leased facility has approved such use as a temporary measure to address inadequate heating by the building's heating system.

Q: *Can I use a portable space heater as a permanent substitute for any required repair or maintenance of the heating system?*

A: No.

Q: *In which specific areas are portable space heaters never permitted?*

A: Portable space heaters are never to be used in any UMDNJ *laboratory*, in all areas in *healthcare occupancies* accredited by the Joint Commission, (except, under certain circumstances, in non-sleeping staff or employee areas only), and in all areas primarily used for the *storage of combustible materials* such as office stationary, drapes or chemicals.

Q: *Is there a specific procedure for portable space heater use in University Hospital (UH)?*

A: If a portable space heater is to be used in the UH, it must have an approval tag of the UH Clinical Engineering Department.

Q: *If portable space heater use is approved for an area, can it be revoked?*

A: If the portable space heater use presents an undue danger to life or property, such use may be specifically prohibited by the authority having jurisdiction (i.e., the DCA) or an EOHSS representative.

Q: *Can I bring a personally-owned portable space heater for use on campus?*

A: NO, personally-owned portable space heaters and unapproved types of portable space heaters are not permitted to be used on the University campus.

Q: *What kind of safety criteria should I look for when purchasing a portable space heater?*

A: You should use the safety criteria listed on the reverse side of this fact sheet or consult Physical Plant or EOHSS for more information and guidance.

Q: *Who is responsible for any hazard created as a result of unauthorized or inappropriate use of a space heater?*

A: The user of a space heater is responsible for any hazard or fire code violation created as a result of unauthorized or inappropriate use. The user is required to comply with the safety criteria for space heater selection and safety precautions included in this fact sheet. Non-compliant space heaters will be confiscated.

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Safety Criteria for Portable Space Heaters:

- ♦ Where approved for use, only electrical type space heaters are permitted. All electrical space heaters must meet the following criteria:
- ♦ The equipment is UL (Underwriter Laboratories) approved for the use for which it is designed.
- ♦ The equipment has a sealed element, and does not produce any flames, fumes, or use any fuel.
- ♦ The equipment is equipped to turn off automatically when tilted or turned over.
- ♦ The heating elements can not exceed 100 degrees Centigrade or 212 degrees Fahrenheit.
- ♦ Oil-filled electrical space heaters are recommended over any other types of heaters because they have the best safety record.

Examples of some of these oil-filled heaters which comply with the above safety criteria are: Delonghi/Kenwood (compact model TRN0812TK; size: 14.5" x 6" x 18"), Dayton (model: 1VNX3; size: 15"x 2.5"x 21") and Ace Lakewood (models: LAK6500, LAK5500; size: 16" x 6" x 24").

Safety Precautions for Space Heaters:

Faculty, staff, students and visitors must comply with the following safety precautions when using space heaters. The space heaters must meet the above safety criteria and be placed in areas approved by UMDNJ Physical Plant or the landlord of a leased facility:

- ♦ Maintain a minimum clearance of three feet at all times between stored materials and the heating device.
- ♦ Never leave the heating unit "ON" when unattended.
- ♦ Plug the heating unit directly into an outlet with sufficient capacity.
- ♦ Never use an extension cord with heater because it may overheat and cause a risk of fire.
- ♦ Check the heating unit before each use to make sure that all indicator lights are working. Remove defective units from service immediately.
- ♦ Ensure that the power cord is properly plugged in and is not damaged, crushed by objects, or covered under carpet or rug.
- ♦ Promptly report any unsafe or hazardous conditions to the Departmental supervisor or the campus Physical Plant or EOHSS office.

Questions?

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