

**West Chester University
Department of Environmental Health and Safety**

Use of Portable Electric Space Heaters

Purpose

To set forth the policy for the use and prohibition of portable space heaters in campus facilities.

General

Electric space heaters, when used properly, can provide an additional degree of comfort over and above a facility's heating system. Unfortunately, with the use of these heaters comes the increased risk of fire and potential injury. Therefore, it is necessary to establish and maintain strict guidelines for the use of such appliances.

Policy

1. APPROVAL

A. Portable electric space heaters shall only be permitted in office areas of non-residential buildings for temporary use and only after the following conditions are met:

1. Before use, any portable electric space heater shall be inspected for the following:
 - a. Portable electric space heaters shall bear a UL listing label.
 - b. Portable space heater shall be inspected by Plant Operations personnel (x2444) to insure that the amperage draw will not overload the electrical circuit intended to power the heater. All appropriate information on the permit shall be completed by Plant Operations personnel.
 - c. Portable electric space heaters shall not have worn or damaged electrical cords, and the plugs shall be in good condition.
 - d. Portable electric space heaters shall have a low center of gravity and shall contain a mechanism whereby the heater shuts off automatically if tipped over.
 - e. Portable electric space heaters shall be tagged "Approved for Use" by Plant Operations personnel.
 - f. University employees requesting the use of a portable electric space heater shall sign a "West Chester University Portable Electric Heater Acknowledgement Form" stating that the employee has read and understands the policy regarding the proper use of said heaters. Forms can be obtained through the Department of Environmental Health and Safety, Fire Safety Office (x2129 or x3315).

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B. USE

1. Portable electric space heaters shall be plugged directly into an electrical outlet. The use of any extension cord is strictly prohibited.
2. Portable electric space heaters shall be turned off and unplugged when not in use, and at the end of each business day.
3. Portable electric space heaters shall be inspected frequently. They shall be inspected on a weekly basis at a minimum, preferably weekly, by the user to insure that they are in good working condition.
4. Portable electric space heaters shall be placed a minimum of three (3) feet from any combustible material (e.g. curtains, paper, cloth, etc) and in a well ventilated area.
5. Any portable electric space heater found to be in poor operating condition, damaged, or used improperly, shall be turned off, unplugged and reported to Work Control (x2444) for repair or replacement.

C. PROHIBITION

1. The use of any portable heater that is fueled by kerosene or that produces open flame is strictly prohibited.
2. The use of any portable heater for permanent heating is strictly prohibited.
3. Portable electric space heaters shall not be placed underneath desks, in any means of egress (exit path), or any high traffic area.
4. The use of portable electric space heaters in residence halls is strictly prohibited.

D. HEATING PROBLEMS

1. Portable electric space heaters are not intended for use as permanent heating appliances. Approved portable electric space heaters are only intended to temporarily supplement an office area's heating needs until a permanent solution can be found to correct the area's heating problem, or as an authorized emergency use measure when a building's normal heating system fails. Employees experiencing significant heating problems should call Work Control (x2444) to report the problem. In the event of an extended heating problem in a resident hall or apartment, residents should contact Resident Life.

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**PORTABLE ELECTRIC SPACE HEATER
EMPLOYEE SAFETY CHECKLIST**

Employees utilizing a university owned portable electric space heater shall physically inspect it and its work location on a daily basis for compliance with the ***WCU Policy and Procedures Regarding the Use of Portable Electric Space Heaters***. Any space heater found to be in non-compliance with university policy and procedures shall be made compliant for location or if damaged, immediately removed from service. To assist you with compliance, the following safety checklist is provided:

All checklist questions must have a “Yes” answer for compliance with the ***WCU Policy and Procedures Regarding the Use of Portable Electric Space Heaters***. A “No” answer to any of the following questions shall require the space heater to be immediately relocated for location compliance, or removed from service for its repair or replacement.

Daily Safety Checklist:	Yes	No
Does the heater bear a listing label from Underwriters Laboratory (UL), which indicates that the model has been evaluated and found to operate in a safe manner when the manufacturer’s instructions are followed?		
Has the heater and its cord been inspected to ensure that it is operating in a safe manner and showing no signs of wear or damage?		
If the heater has been found to be operating in an unsafe manner or with a worn or damaged cord, has it been immediately turned off, unplugged, and the condition reported to Work Control (x2444) for investigation, and repair or replacement?		
Does the heater contain a built-in circuit to shut off the appliance if accidentally tipped over?		
Does the heater have a low center of gravity to minimize the potential for tipping over?		
Is the heater plugged directly into an electrical outlet, without the use of an extension cord or any type of multiplex outlet adapter?		
Has the heater been placed in a well-ventilated space for heat to escape and for air to circulate around it?		
Has the heater been placed at least three (3) feet away from all combustible materials (e.g. furniture, paper, curtains, clothing, etc.),		
Has the heater not been located under desks, in the means of egress (e.g. doorways, paths of travel, corridors, etc.) or in any high traffic area?		
Has the heater been turned off and left unplugged if unattended, even for a short period of time?		
Has the heater been turned off and left unplugged at the end of the working day?		

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**PORTABLE ELECTRIC SPACE HEATER
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM**

I hereby attest that I have read, reviewed, and fully understand the *West Chester University Policy and Procedures Regarding the Use of Portable Electric Space Heaters* and its attached Portable Electric Space Heater Safety Checklist. I further agree to comply with all parts and aspects of said policy and procedures.

Location of heater acknowledgement:

Building: _____

Room Number: _____

Department: _____

Date Heater Placed in Service: _____

Printed Name: _____

Signature: _____

Copies To: Environmental Health and Safety
Recipient of portable space heater

Original To: Plant Operations Director

**PORTABLE ELECTRIC SPACE HEATERS
PLANT OPERATIONS SAFETY CHECKLIST**

Plant Operations Checklist:

Portable electric space heaters are not intended to provide supplemental heat in an office area unless the office area has been inspected and evaluated by Plant Operations personnel for permanent solutions to the heating problem. Mechanical or engineering solutions are the preferred method of addressing an office area heating need.

University owned portable electric space heaters shall be physically inspected by the Plant Operations personnel for compliance with electrical safety standards, and the *West Chester University Policy and Procedures Regarding the Use of Portable Electric Space Heaters* before being released for service.

University owned portable electric space heaters found to be in non-compliance with electrical safety standards, and/or the *West Chester University Policy and Procedures Regarding the Use of Portable Electric Space Heaters* shall be immediately removed from service and tagged non-compliant. To assist you with compliance, the following safety checklist is provided:

All checklist questions must have a “Yes” answer for compliance with the *West Chester University Policy and Procedures Regarding the Use of Portable Electric Space Heaters*. A “No” answer to any of the following questions shall prevent the Plant Operations personnel from releasing the space heater for service.

Safety Checklist:	Yes	No
Will electrical circuit for room permit the use of a portable electrical space heater?		
Does the heater bear a listing label from UL (Underwriters Laboratory) for its intended use?		
Has the heater and its cord been inspected and checked for signs of wear and/or damage?		
Does the heater have a low center of gravity to minimize its potential for tipping over?		
Does the heater contain a built-in circuit to shut off the appliance if accidentally tipped over?		
Has the university employee requesting the use of the portable electric space heater in their work area signed the <i>West Chester University Portable Electric Space Heater Acknowledgement Form</i> stating they have read, reviewed and fully understand the university policy and procedures, and agreed to comply with them?		
Has EHS approved tag/label been attached to the unit with room number and building in which the unit will be used?		