

## **PORTABLE SPACE HEATER POLICY**

### **PURPOSE**

To set forth the policy for approved uses and specific prohibitions of portable space heaters in all University owned structures.

### **GENERAL**

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. APPROVED USE OF PORTABLE SPACE HEATERS**

- A. Portable space heaters that operate using electric are approved but shall only be permitted in 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 heaters before being used shall be inspected by Facilities personnel (x2444) to insure that the amperage draw will not overload the electrical circuit intended to power the heater.
    - 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.

#### **2. PROCEDURE FOR USE OF PORTABLE SPACE HEATERS**

- A. Resident students requesting the use of a portable electric space heater shall sign a "WCU Portable Electric Heater Acknowledgement Form" stating that the student 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 by calling 610-436-3333.

- B. Portable electric space heaters shall be plugged directly into an electrical outlet. The use of any extension cord with a portable space heater is strictly prohibited.
- C. Portable electric space heaters shall be turned off and unplugged when not in use.
- D. Portable electric space heaters shall be inspected frequently. They shall be inspected on a daily basis by the user to insure that they are in good working condition. Environmental Health and Safety and/or Facilities Personnel will be allowed to Spot Check all the rooms which will be utilizing portable space heaters. If the user is not complying with the rules set forth, the space heater will be removed from the room.
- E. 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.
- F. Any portable electric space heater found to be in poor operating condition, damaged, or used improperly, shall be turned off, unplugged and removed from the room.

### **3. PROHIBITIONS ON USE OF PORTABLE SPACE HEATER**

- A. The use of any portable heater that is fueled by kerosene or that produces open flame is strictly prohibited for use in any occupied facility on campus. These types of portable space heaters may be approved for use to provide heat in new construction projects or existing facilities that are under renovation when other heating sources are not available.
- B. The use of any portable heater for permanent heating is strictly prohibited.
- C. Portable electric space heaters shall not be placed underneath desks, in any means of egress (exit path), or any high traffic area.

### **4. HEATING PROBLEMS**

- A. 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 area's heating needs until a permanent solution can be found to correct the heating problem, or as an authorized emergency use measure when a building's normal heating system fails. If experiencing significant heating problems, 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 Residence Life maintenance.

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## PORTABLE SPACE HEATER SAFETY CHECKLIST

Individuals utilizing a university provided portable electric space heater shall physically inspect it and its 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.

<b>Daily Safety Checklist:</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
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?		



**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:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date Heater Placed in Service:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Printed Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

Copies To: Recipient of portable space heater

Original To: Environmental Health and Safety