

**UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, MERCED
STATEMENT ON CAMPUS POLICY
REGARDING THE USE OF PORTABLE ELECTRIC SPACE HEATERS**

RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL : Facilities Management;
Environmental Health & Safety

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REFERENCES AND RESOURCES:

California Code of Regulations - Title 24 Part 9: 2010 California Fire Code

BACKGROUND:

Portable, electric space heaters (hereto referred to as portable heaters or heaters), when used properly, can supplement a building's heating system to provide an additional degree of personal comfort. When used improperly, these heaters can become a potential source of increased fire risk and personal injury. Therefore it is necessary to establish and maintain strict guidelines for the use of these appliances.

Additionally, electric space heaters draw significant amounts of power and can have a negative impact on the overall campus energy use.

POLICY:

General:

This policy applies to the use of portable heaters by all students, faculty and staff in any building that is owned, rented or leased by the University.

Portable heaters shall only be used on a temporary basis when the central heating system is malfunctioning and a the space cannot be maintained at a comfortable temperature (68 degrees F, minimum) during normal occupied hours.

If there is a problem with the building heating system please notify FM Help at <http://fmhelp.ucmerced.edu>.

The use of portable heaters will require the written approval of Facilities Management to ensure compliance with the conditions of this policy and minimize the risk of personal injury.

Approved Portable Heaters:

Only portable heaters that meet the following requirements will be considered for use at the University:

- The heater must be electrically powered. No gas, liquid or solid-fueled heaters will be allowed.
- Heaters shall comply with the requirements of the currently adopted version of the CCR Title 24 - Part 9, California Fire Code.
- Heaters shall be listed and labeled. Tags or labels indicating the device has been tested and approved by either Underwriters Laboratories (UL) or Factory Mutual (FM) can be found on the electrical cord or die stamped on the heater itself.
- The heater shall have a thermostat for heat regulation that will shut off the heater once the desired temperature has been reached.
- Heaters shall be equipped with a mechanism that will automatically shut off the heater if it gets knocked over.

Approval Process:

Prior to use, any portable electric space heater shall be inspected by Facilities Management personnel for the following:

- UL Listing label.
- Condition of the heater, cord and plug.
- Electrical amperage draw to insure the heater will not overload the electrical circuit intended to power the heater.
- All appropriate information on the *Facilities Management Checklist* shall be completed by Facilities Management personnel.
- Anyone requesting the use of a portable heater shall sign a *University of California, Merced Portable Electric Heater Acknowledgement Form* stating they have read and understands the policy regarding the proper use of said heaters.
- Heaters shall be tagged "Approved for Use" by Facilities Management personnel.

Users shall consult with EH&S prior to requesting a space heater for laboratory areas in which chemicals are used or stored.

Use:

Once use of a heater has been approved, the following guidelines shall be followed for safe operation:

- Heaters shall be plugged directly into an approved electrical receptacle.
- Heaters shall be placed in a well ventilated area. Clearance to combustible material (e.g. curtains, paper, cloth, etc.) shall be per

manufacturer's requirements or a minimum of three (3) feet whichever is greater.

- Heaters shall be placed on the floor.
- Heaters shall be turned off and unplugged when not in use, and at the end of each business day.
- Heaters shall be inspected frequently, preferably on a weekly basis, by the user to insure that they are in good working condition.
- Any heater found to be in poor operating condition, damaged or improperly used, shall be turned off, unplugged and reported to EH&S by going to <http://ehs.ucmerced.edu/> and clicking on the "Report a Safety Concern" link.

Prohibitions:

- Portable electric space heaters fueled by any liquid, gas or solid fuel or that produces an open flame are strictly prohibited.
- The use of any portable heater for permanent heating is strictly prohibited.
- The use of any extension cord or power strip to plug in the heater is strictly prohibited.
- Portable electric space heaters shall not be placed underneath desks, in a means of egress (exit path) or any high traffic area.
- The use of portable electric space heaters in residence halls is strictly prohibited.
- Heaters shall not be placed near building thermostats.
- Never place or store anything on top of heaters.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment I: Portable Electric Space Heater - Facilities Management Checklist

Attachment II: Portable Electric Space Heater Acknowledgement Form

**PORTABLE ELECTRIC SPACE HEATER
 FACILITIES MANAGEMENT SAFETY CHECKLIST**

Facilities Management 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 the Facilities Management personnel for a permanent solution to the heating problem. Mechanical engineering solutions are the preferred method of addressing an office area heating need.

All space heaters shall be physically inspected by Facilities Management personnel for compliance with electrical safety standards and the *University of California, Merced Policy Regarding the Use of Portable Electric Space Heaters* before being placed into service.

An inspection appointment can be arranged with Facilities Management personnel through the FM Help website <http://fmhelp.ucmerced.edu>.

Any space heater found to be in non-compliance with electrical safety standards or *University of California, Merced Policy Regarding the Use of Portable Electric Space Heaters* shall be immediately removed from service. To assist with compliance, the following safety checklist is provided:

All checklist questions must have a **"Yes"** answer for compliance with ***University of California, Merced Policy Regarding the Use of Portable Electric Space Heaters***. A **"No"** answer to any of the following questions shall prevent the heater from being allowed for service.

| Safety Checklist: | Yes | No |
|--|-----|----|
| Will the electrical circuit for the room permit the use of a portable electric heater? | | |
| Does the heater bear a listing label from UL 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 heater in their work area signed <i>The Portable Electric Space Heater Acknowledgement For</i> stating they have read, reviewed and fully understand the University policy and agreed to comply with it? | | |
| Has a Facilities Management tag/label been attached to the unit with the room number & building in which the unit will be used? | | |

University of California, Merced
Facilities Management and Department of Environmental Health and Safety

**PORTABLE ELECTRIC SPACE HEATER
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM**

I hereby attest that I have read, reviewed and fully understand the ***University of California, Merced Policy Regarding the Use of Portable Electric Space Heaters***. I further agree to comply with all parts and aspects of said policy.

Location of heater acknowledgement:

Building: _____

Rom Number: _____

Department: _____

Date Heater Placed in Service: _____

Printed Name: _____

Signature: _____

Copies to: Environmental Hath and Safety
User of portable space heater

Original to: Facilities Management