

PORTABLE SPACE HEATERS

Authority:	Vice Chancellor Business Affairs
History:	Effective October 2009
Source of Authority:	UNC Code, Section 502
Related Links:	Portable Space Heater Usage Request
Responsible Office:	Physical Plant; Environmental Health & Safety

I. Purpose

This document defines UNCW policy regarding the use of portable space heaters on campus.

II. Scope

This policy applies to all buildings on the UNCW campus.

III. Policy

A. General

1. The use of portable space heaters on campus is prohibited except in those locations that have been approved as exceptions as described in this policy. Building Occupants are responsible for submitting an exception request for use of a portable space heater.
2. In the case of exceptions, Physical Plant will determine if existing electrical systems can support operation of a space heater, and will respond to electrical problems that could result from use of portable space heaters.
3. Environmental Health & Safety (EH&S) will be responsible for inspections and enforcing this policy. Any portable space heaters found that have not been approved for use will be removed.

B. Requirements for a Heater

1. Space heaters should be rated not to exceed 120 Volts, 12.5 Amps, 60 Hz, 1500 Watts and 5200 BTU's.

2. Space heaters must be electrically powered; fuel powered or propane space heaters are only permissible upon approval of EH&S.
3. Space heaters must be approved by a recognized testing laboratory, such as Factory Mutual (FM) or Underwriters Laboratory (UL) and must be labeled accordingly.
4. Space heaters must have a thermostat that shuts off the unit when a set temperature is reached.
5. Space heaters must have a tip over shut down feature such that if a space heater is knocked over the unit will automatically shut off.

C. Prohibited Areas

1. Space heaters are prohibited at all times in the following locations:
2. Labs or other areas where flammable liquids or vapors (e.g., gasoline, paint, solvents) may be present.
3. Space heaters must be kept away from combustible materials such as files, curtains, paper, and trash cans.
4. Wet locations (bathrooms, kitchens, laundry areas, etc.).
5. In aisles, exit and high-traffic paths, or any location where it may present a trip hazard.
6. On any elevated surface where the danger of it falling to a lower surface exists.
7. Areas where young children may be present.

D. User Responsibilities

1. If an exception is approved, the user is responsible for the following:
2. Read and follow the manufacturer's operating instructions.
3. Ensure the space heater is kept in good working condition.
4. Replace missing guards and controls at once.
5. Inspect the electrical cord before use. Look for frayed wire or cracked insulation. If there are any defects in the cord or unit, DO NOT USE.

6. Do not overload electrical outlets or else the circuit breakers will trip, which may adversely affect others in the area. If this proves to be a problem for a particular location, portable space heaters will be restricted.
7. Space heaters must be plugged directly into a hard-wired electrical wall outlet or power strip equipped with circuit breaker protection – extension cords may not be used under any circumstance.
8. Do not run a space heater's electrical cord under carpeting or throw rugs, or through doorways.
9. Nothing shall be placed on top of or touching a space heater.
10. Prior to the first extended use and weekly thereafter test the tip-over protection (see below). If inoperable, DO NOT USE.
11. Be alert to any signs of overheating, e.g., smoke, odor, cord or heater casing discolored or hot to the touch, etc.
12. Immediately turn off the heater if any malfunction is suspected and do not resume use until the heater has been replaced or inspected and deemed safe by Physical Plant Electrical Services.
13. If the circuit breaker powering the heater trips, turn off the heater and contact Work Order Administration at extension 23101.
14. The space heater will not be left unattended for more than 10 minutes.

IV. Procedure

1. Prior to purchasing or using any portable space heater, department must submit a "Portable Space Heater Usage Request" form to the Physical Plant.
2. Physical Plant will determine if the building HVAC system is unable to maintain space temperature within campus setpoint, and if it is not able, forward form to EH&S (Campus building temperature targets are 67 F-to-74 F for the heating season and 73 F-to-79 F for the cooling season).
3. EH&S will conduct a needs assessment to confirm the space is conducive to use of a portable space heater, and contact the requestor.
4. EH&S will label space heaters to indicate approval for use, keep track of exceptions, and will contact the parties requesting the exception with the results of the review.