

Title: Use of Space Heaters in University Buildings
Author: Environmental Health & Safety/UConn Fire Department
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Use of Space Heaters in University Buildings

PURPOSE

As stated in the University's [Health and Safety Policy](#), the University of Connecticut is committed to providing a healthful and safe environment for all activities under its jurisdiction. In keeping with this commitment, the University has developed this policy to protect the University community and its visitors from the significant fire and workplace safety risks posed by the use of space heaters. This policy is in keeping with the requirements of the Connecticut Life Safety and Building codes and ConnOSHA and CT Department of Public Health regulations.

SCOPE

This policy applies to the use of space heaters by faculty, staff, students, and others in University-owned buildings at the Storrs and regional campuses and at the Law School.

POLICY STATEMENT

Space heaters pose serious fire and electrical hazards, and are not efficient from an energy use standpoint; therefore, the use of space heaters at the University is strongly discouraged. Their use should be reserved for times of heating system failures rather than as a means for supplementing an existing heating system.

University building occupants should first contact Facilities Operations Work Order Control (6-3113) to request assistance in adjusting the temperature of an area. If Facilities Operations personnel determine that the work area cannot be heated to the satisfaction of the occupant(s), the temporary use of space heaters will be allowed **with the following exceptions:**

Space heaters are not permitted in residential occupancies unless issued by permit through the UConn Fire Department in emergencies. Space heaters are not permitted, under any circumstances, in laboratories, inpatient units, storage areas, or areas not actively occupied by people. However, space heaters will be permitted in laboratory office spaces.

ENFORCEMENT

The University Fire Department and the Department of Environmental Health and Safety reserve the right to inspect and declare “unapproved” any space heater that creates a safety hazard or is inappropriate to a particular location, based on specific circumstances or legal requirements. If warranted, space heaters may be removed from service and taken to a designated storage area for later collection by its owner and subsequent removal from the University.

Violations of this policy may result in appropriate disciplinary measures in accordance with University Laws and By-Laws, General Rules of Conduct for All University Employees, applicable collective bargaining agreements, and the University of Connecticut Student Conduct Code.

PROCEDURES

Approved Heaters

In order to ensure that all space heaters meet current safety guidelines, the University Fire Department and the Department of Environmental Health and Safety **have approved a limited selection of space heaters for use within the University, which are available at Central Stores.** See approved space heaters [here](#).

Effective Fall Semester 2003, all other space heaters currently in use must be taken out of service. Department-owned heaters must be turned in as surplus to Central Storrs. Privately owned heaters must be removed from the University.

Safe Use and Care

1. **BEFORE OPERATING A HEATER, ALWAYS READ AND FOLLOW THE MANUFACTURER’S OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS.**
2. To prevent overloading an electrical circuit, a space heater must be plugged into a circuit that is rated for 15 amps or more.
3. Always turn off a heater and unplug it when you leave the office. NEVER leave an operating heater unattended.
4. Before use, ensure that the heater is clean and not covered with dust. The cord must be in good condition and not frayed.
5. NEVER use an extension cord or power strip with a space heater. It should be plugged directly into a permanent wall outlet (receptacle).
Exception: Radiant Panel heaters may be used with extension cords or power strips rated for 15 amps or more.
6. Never run a power cord under a carpet or floor mat.
7. NEVER use a heater where flammable materials or vapors may be present.
8. Do not use space heaters under desks or in other enclosed spaces.
Exception: Radiant Panel heaters may be used under desks.

9. Do not place a heater near combustible materials such as papers, fabric, plastics, or office furniture.
10. Do not place a heater in or near wet areas or in high traffic areas such as exit ways.
11. ALWAYS maintain safe distance clearances around space heaters, as directed by the manufacturers' instructions.
12. Inspect space heaters at least annually and have them repaired, as needed, by a qualified electrician. Heaters that cannot be repaired must be discarded with the plug cut off to prevent inadvertent use by others.
13. Avoid placing space heaters near room thermostats.

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