

## **A quick reminder about space heaters:**

*By Cathy Black, OSU Environmental Safety Officer*

Portable space heaters can pose a major workplace fire safety hazard. Use of unapproved or unsafe space heaters – or use of space heaters in an inappropriate or unsafe manner - presents a significant fire risk. They are nice to have for extra warmth, but they can cause burns and fires if not used properly. Therefore, to ensure safety of life and property from the risks of space heater use at OSU, all visitors, students, faculty and staff are required to comply with the following requirements of the OSU Fire and Life Safety Compliance Guide in accordance with the Fire and Life Safety Policy.

### **Space Heaters Policy:**

1. Portable space heaters are **not permitted** in any university owned or leased facility unless OSU Facilities Operations and Development or the landlord of a leased facility has approved such use as a *temporary* measure to address inadequate heating by the building's Heating Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) system. Space heaters *should not be used as a substitute for any required repair or maintenance* of the HVAC system. Where approved, *only electrical* type space heaters, which at least meet the safety criteria listed on the next page, are allowed.
2. Any non UL rated space heaters are not permitted for use on university premises.
3. Space heaters of any kind are strictly prohibited in **all OSU laboratories and in all areas primarily used for the storage of combustible materials such as office stationary, drapes or chemicals.**
5. **The user of a space heater is ultimately responsible** for any hazard or fire code violation created as a result of unauthorized or inappropriate use.
6. If a space heater is to be used, the following safety criteria must be met and operational safety precautions must be followed:
  - The equipment is UL (Underwriter Laboratories) approved for the use for which it is designed.
  - The equipment has a sealed element, and does not produce any flames, fumes or use any fuel.
  - The equipment is equipped to turn off automatically when tilted or turned over.
  - The heating elements cannot exceed 100 degrees Centigrade or 212 degrees Fahrenheit.
  - Oil-filled electrical space heaters are recommended over any other types of heaters because they have the best safety record.

### **Precautions for Space Heaters:**

1. Maintain a minimum clearance of three feet (or one meter) at all times between stored materials and the heating device.
2. Never leave the heating unit “ON” when unattended.
3. Plug the heating unit directly into an outlet with sufficient capacity (not an extension cord).
4. Never use an extension cord or surge protector with the heater because it may overheat and cause a risk of fire.
5. Check the heating unit before each use to make sure that all indicator lights are working.
6. Remove defective units from service immediately.
7. Ensure the power cord is properly plugged in and is not damaged or crushed by objects or covered under carpeting or a rug.
8. Promptly report any unsafe or hazardous conditions to CPH Facilities at 614-247-8612 or email ([facilities@cph.osu.edu](mailto:facilities@cph.osu.edu)); and/or Division of Emergency Management & Fire Prevention at 614-247-7777 and/or OSU Facilities Operations and Development at 614-292-HELP (4357) or [service@facilities@osu.edu](mailto:service@facilities@osu.edu)