

## GUIDELINE 12. PORTABLE ELECTRIC HEATERS

### 1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To establish a guideline for the safe use of portable electric heating equipment in buildings of the campus of the University of Pennsylvania. All other portable heating equipment is prohibited unless approved by Facilities and Real Estate Services and Fire and Emergency Services,
- 1.2 The improper use of portable electric heating equipment has caused many injuries and property damage. As such, use of portable heating equipment is not authorized in campus buildings. However, in situations where the use of portable heating is necessary and approved by the proper authorities to maintain a comfortable work/living environment, this document provides a waiver process and safe operational guideline for the type and use of portable electric heating equipment acceptable in University of Pennsylvania owned buildings.

### 2.0 DEFINITIONS

- 2.1 **Labeled-** Equipment or material to which has been attached a label, symbol or other identifying mark of a nationally recognized testing laboratory, inspection agency or other organization concerned with product evaluation that maintains periodic inspection of production of labeled equipment or materials, and by whose labeling is indicated compliance with nationally recognized standards or tests to determine suitable usage in a specified manner.
- 2.2 **Listed-** Equipment or materials included on a list published by an approved testing laboratory, inspection agency or other organization concerned with current product evaluation that maintains periodic inspection of production of listed equipment or materials, and whose listing states that equipment or materials comply with approved nationally recognized standards and have been tested or evaluated and found suitable for use in a specified manner.

### 3.0 RESPONSIBILITY

- 3.1 Personnel and supervisors shall review this safety guideline and seek university approval for using any portable heater by contacting Fire and Emergency Services at [f&es@publicsafety.upenn.edu](mailto:f&es@publicsafety.upenn.edu) or 215-573-7857 to start application process for evaluating the site and equipment to ensure compliance.

### 4.0 PROCEDURES

#### 4.1 ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS

- 4.1.1 A request form for the waiver to use a portable heater must be submitted annually – See Appendix 12.0
- 4.1.2 A portable heating device must be installed and maintained in compliance with all City of Philadelphia codes, the University of Pennsylvania Facilities and Real Estate Services (FRES) Design Guidelines, the Division of Public Safety Guideline, and other policies and procedures of the University of Pennsylvania.
- 4.1.3 No other electrical device shall be used in the receptacle where a portable heater is in use.
- 4.1.4 A portable heater must be plugged directly into a receptacle and the power supply cord must not be covered by any material; extension cords and power strips are not permitted.

- 4.1.5 Operation of a portable heater must take place at least three (3) feet away from any combustible material.
- 4.1.6 An operating portable heater must not be left unattended.
- 4.1.7 Inspect heaters at the beginning and periodically during heating season for possible defects.

**4.2 ALL PORTABLE HEATERS MUST MEET THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA**

- 4.2.1 A portable heater must be controlled by a thermostat that controls heat output settings.
- 4.2.2 A portable heater shall not have a "timing" device to start or stop heating operations.
- 4.2.3 A portable heater shall have a three (3) speed fan setting.
- 4.2.4 A portable heater must have a "tip-over" feature that automatically shuts off the heater if knocked over or if the heater becomes unbalanced.
- 4.2.5 A portable heater shall not be too hot to the touch.
- 4.2.6 A portable heater that has an element that "glows" is not permitted.
- 4.2.7 If a portable heater will be left unattended, the heater must be shut off.
- 4.2.8 The power cord for a portable heater must be three (3) prong grounded if available.

**4.3 GENERAL**

- 4.3.1 Portable heating devices shall be listed and labeled by a national recognized testing laboratory. The use of said device shall be in accordance with the terms of the listing and manufacturer's instructions. Portable heating devices must also be labeled by FRES/FES.
- 4.3.2 The heating element or combustion chamber shall be permanently guarded as to prevent accidental contact by persons or materials.
- 4.3.3 When in operation, a portable heating device shall be fixed in place and protected from damage, overturning or dislodgement in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

**5.0 REFERENCES**

- 5.1 **Philadelphia Fire Code: 605.10 Portable, electric space heaters.**

**6.0 CONTACT INFORMATION**

- 5.1 **For question regarding this guideline contact Fire and Emergency Services at (215) 573-7857 or [f&es@publicsafety.upenn.edu](mailto:f&es@publicsafety.upenn.edu)**