Use of Space Heaters at SUNY Potsdam

Definitions

Term	Definitions
College	The State University of New York at Potsdam.
Employee	A public employee working for The College, a Research Foundation employee associated with The College, or a PACES employee associated with The College.
Space Heater	A self-contained appliance, usually electric, for heating an enclosed room or space.
Air Treatment	The removal of air contaminants and/or the control of room temperature and humidity.
OSHA Recommended Temperatures	Building temperature between 68F to 76F.

Policy Statement

The use of space heaters is strictly prohibited in all College buildings except in cases as outlined in the procedures covered in this policy.

Purpose

This policy aims to ensure the safety and efficient operation of heating systems at the College while minimizing fire hazards and energy consumption associated with space heater use. In addition, this policy will better reduce the excessive electrical load and potential safety hazards created by unregulated space heaters.

Procedures

The Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) provides engineering and administrative guidance to employers regarding temperature control for occupied spaces. OSHA recommendation is a temperature in the range of 68-76° F and humidity control in the range of 20%-60%. Maintaining this range of temperature and humidity not only satisfies the OSHA guidelines but also helps the College maintain sustainable practices through reduced energy consumption.

The use of space heaters is prohibited except where it is determined by Physical Plant that the building HVAC system cannot maintain the OSHA-approved temperature in the area in question. Under these circumstances, the use of space heaters may be temporarily authorized dependent on the following:

- The space heater shall be inspected by the Office of Environmental Health, Safety, & Emergency Management to ensure compliance with the Fire Code and applicable safety regulations.
- The use of the space heater in a designated space is approved by Physical Plant after a review of the area's electrical system and its ability to handle the additional electrical load.

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If you believe the temperature of your work area is outside the set points, please contact the Physical Plant at (315) 267-2603 or submit a work order.

General Safety Information

A space heater must meet the following criteria in order to be approved for temporary use:

- Underwriters Laboratories (UL) Listed – Space heaters must be certified by UL or an equivalent safety certification agency.
- Automatic Shut-Off - Space heaters must have an automatic shut-off feature that engages if the heater is tipped over.
- Plug Directly into Outlet - Space heaters must plug directly into a wall outlet; the use of extension cords or power strips is prohibited.
- Clearance - Space heaters must be placed at least three feet away from combustible materials such as furniture, curtains, papers, and electronics.
- Supervision - Space heaters must be attended while in use, and should never be left operating unattended.

Role	Individual/Group	Contact Information
Comply with	All Employees	N/A
Policy Executor(s)	Patrick O'Brien – Director of Environmental Health, Safety, & Emergency Management	(315) 267-2596 obrienpm@potsdam.edu

Change History

Date	Change History
December 1, 2024	New Policy

Effective Date: December 1, 2024

Approved by President's Council: October 30, 2024