Use of Space Heaters

In accordance with Governor Jim Doyle's Executive Order 132 dated November 21, 2005, the Department of Administration issued guidelines related to temperature, humidity, hours of operation and other variables that affect energy usage. The main focus of the regulations is thermostat settings, which will be 68 degrees in the winter (60 degrees during unoccupied hours) and 76 degrees in the summer. The regulations also require that room lights and office equipment be turned off when not in use and prohibits the use of space heaters and fans.

Extenuating circumstances such as health, regulatory and research requirements may necessitate an exemption from the temperatures set forth in the regulations. The reason for the exemption will need to be documented. For example, if there is a medical reason, a document from a medical provider will be necessary. To request an exemption, please contact the Facility Services Help Desk at 229-4742.

In the event an exemption is granted, only space heaters meeting the following criteria are permitted:

- The heater must be electrically powered and listed by Underwriters Laboratories (UL) or approved by Factory Mutual Insurance Company (FM). Tags or labels indicating the device has been tested and approved by either of these agencies can be found on the electrical cord or die stamped on the heater itself.
- The heater must have a thermostat for heat regulation. The heater's thermostat will sense that the area has reached a certain temperature and reduce heating until the temperature in the area drops (very much like the thermostat in your house).
- The heater must be fan driven. A guard or screen must cover the heating element.
- The heater must have a tip-over shutdown feature. If the heater is knocked over, the unit must automatically shut off.

Space heaters with the following are NOT permitted:

- Space heaters with heated metal coils are not permitted.
- Fuel powered (propane, kerosene) space heaters are not permitted.
- Heaters without thermostats (with simple "on/off" or "high/low" switches), which continue to heat without any regulation and can easily cause fires, are not permitted.

Approved space heaters may be used only if the following conditions are met:

- The heater may only be located on the floor. Heaters located on filing cabinets, tables, desks or equipment are more susceptible to being knocked over, resulting in accidents or fires. Never place anything on top of a space heater.
- At least 3 feet of clearance must be maintained around the heater at all times. Combustible materials like paper, plastic and cloth must be kept away from the heater.
- Electric cords must be kept out of foot traffic paths to prevent tripping. Extension cords are not allowed. Heaters must be plugged directly into a wall receptacle.
- The heater must be unplugged (not just turned off) any time the room or area being heated is unoccupied, especially at the end of the workday.
Heaters may not be used in areas where flammable liquids are in use or stored. Space heaters are not allowed in the Residence Halls.

The Departments of Facility Services and University Safety and Assurances reserve the right to inspect and approve or reject any space heater that creates a hazard or is inappropriate to a particular location based on specific circumstances and/or fire safety code requirements. Additionally, building chairs and supervisors have authority to impose additional restrictions on the use and location of space heaters.