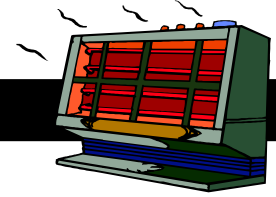


November 2008

# SAFETY NEWSLETTER



## TOPIC: THE PROPER USE OF SPACE HEATERS

The use of portable electric space heaters is quite common in the winter. And while these seemingly harmless devices may be an efficient way to heat a cold or drafty space, they can pose certain safety hazards when used incorrectly. **Space heaters are responsible for many fires annually.**

Even though a portable electric space heater does not have an open flame, the heating elements of some are hot enough to cause nearby combustibles to ignite. Additionally, fires can be caused by improper use, and burns by contact with the heating element or a hot surface.

Therefore, taking appropriate safety measures is vital in preventing an accident. The following are basic safety tips to follow when using portable electric space heaters:

- **Space heaters used on campus must be electric-powered.** Check each season for fraying, splitting wires or overheating. **(Do not use an extension cord.)**
- Read and follow manufacturer's operating instructions. (Keep the manual nearby to refer to when needed.)
- Space heaters must be kept at least **3 feet away** from anything that can burn. (e.g., furniture, clothing, books and people)
- Never place anything on top of or have anything touching a space heater.
- Space heaters must have a tip-over shut down feature that shuts the unit off when the heater is knocked over. Heaters must also include a thermostat that automatically shuts the unit off when a certain temperature is reached.
- Use a space heater with a guard around the heating element.
- Use a space heater certified by a nationally recognized testing laboratory. (e.g., UL approved)
- Never operate a defective or broken space heater.
- Electrical equipment that produces a tingle, shock, crackling noise, smoke, etc. should be immediately taken out of service.
- Place space heaters on the floor. Never place heaters on furniture and do not place heaters where objects could fall on them.
- **Space heaters must always be turned off and unplugged when areas being heated are not occupied.**