



# MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™


## OP 95.502: Use of Portable, Electric Space Heaters

### Purpose

Mississippi State University is committed to providing comfortable yet safe working conditions for its faculty, staff, and students. Employees should first report uncomfortable conditions such as inadequate heating to Facilities Management at (662) 325-2005 or [www.fm.msstate.edu](http://www.fm.msstate.edu) to determine if adjustments can be made to the building's HVAC system. The use of portable, electric space heaters should be a temporary measure and is permitted only if properly and appropriately used. Portable electric heaters are high-wattage appliances that have the potential to ignite nearby combustible materials like curtains, beds, sofas, paper, clothing, and flammable liquids. If ignition results from a heater left on and unattended, a major fire could result.

### Policy

Section 605.10 of the 2012 International Fire Code establishes the minimum requirements for the use of portable, electric space heaters. In compliance with these standards and to ensure the safety of its faculty, staff, students and facilities, MSU has established the following requirements for the use of portable, electric space heaters within its facilities.

- All portable, electric space heaters utilized on the campus of MSU must be:
  - Underwriter's Laboratory (UL) listed and labeled. The following UL mark must be displayed on the heater:  

  - In good working condition. Never operate a heater you suspect is damaged. Before use, inspect the heater, cord, and plug for damage. Follow all manufacturer operation and maintenance instructions.
  - Equipped with a safety "tip-over" shut-off feature. Insure that the heater is placed on a stable, level surface, and located where it will not be knocked over.
  - Plugged directly into a hard-wired electric wall outlet. Only the power cord supplied with the unit may be used. *Extension cords or power strips must not be used under any circumstance.* Never run the heater's cord under rugs or carpeting. This can damage the cord, causing it and nearby objects to burn. To prevent electric shocks and electrocutions, always keep electric heaters away from water, and never touch an electric heater if you are wet.
  - Positioned a minimum of three feet from any combustible material. Keep combustible material such as beds, sofas, curtains, papers, and clothes at least 3 feet from the front, sides, and rear of the heater. *This requirement prohibits the placement of a portable, electric space heater under one's desk.*
  - Continuously under supervision. The unit must never be left unattended. It must be unplugged, not just turned off, anytime you leave your work area.

\*\*If you are unsure whether a heater meets all of these criteria, you may contact the Environmental Health & Safety Office or Facilities Management for consultation.

- Portable, electric space heaters are prohibited in any unattended area and specifically in the following areas:
  - Residence halls.
  - Storage rooms and closets.
  - Laboratories.
- Emergency situations may arise where the *temporary* use of portable, electric space heaters is necessary to protect university resources from extreme cold. Such usage will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, authorized by unit director after consultation with Environmental Health & Safety, and include procedures for monitoring the heaters while in use.

**Enforcement**

Any personally owned portable, electric space heater not meeting the above minimum requirements will be removed from MSU property by the employee at the time that notification is made. Any MSU owned portable, electric space heaters not meeting the above minimum requirements will be removed and disposed of by Property Control.

For employees found in violation of this policy:

- First offense – Environmental Health & Safety will notify the employee and report policy violation to employee’s direct supervisor. Facilities Management team will notify Environmental Health & Safety if they discover an employee in violation of this policy.
- Second and following offenses – the University will take appropriate corrective or disciplinary actions, up to and including termination.

**Review**

This policy will be reviewed annually or as needed by the Director of Environmental Health & Safety and by the Executive Director of Campus Services with recommendations for revision presented to Vice President for Research and Economic Development, Vice President for Campus Services, and Vice President for the Division of Agriculture, Forestry and Veterinary Medicine.

**Reviewed By**

<u>/s/ Michael Parsons</u> Director, Environmental Health & Safety	<u>01/21/2015</u> Date
<u>/s/ George Davis</u> Executive Director, Campus Services	<u>01/21/2015</u> Date
<u>/s/ David R. Shaw</u> Vice President, Research & Economic Development	<u>01/22/2015</u> Date
<u>/s/ Amy Tuck</u> Vice President, Campus Services	<u>01/26/2015</u> Date
<u>/s/ Gregory A. Bohach</u> Vice President, Agriculture, Forestry and Veterinary Medicine	<u>01/23/2015</u> Date

/s/ Timothy N. Chamblee  
Assistant Vice President and Director  
Institutional Research & Effectiveness

02/04/2015  
Date

/s/ Joan Lucas  
General Counsel

02/05/2015  
Date

**Approved by:**

/s/ Mark Keenum  
President

03/23/2015  
Date