

### Portable Space Heater Safety

Washington University – St. Louis discourages the use of space heaters in the workplace due to the increased risk of fire from electrical circuit overload or from contact with combustible materials. Therefore, employees whose workplaces are too cold should contact the following: Danforth Facilities Customer Service (935-5544) or Medical School Facilities Customer Service (362-3100) for help with adjusting the temperature. In certain cases a space heater may be necessary. However, the following requirements must be met:

- Only portable ceramic or oil-filled space heaters are allowed.
- Convection-type heaters (wire that glows), propane, kerosene and solid fuel space heaters are not allowed!
- Space heater must not exceed 1500 watts. Due to excessive electrical current demands of these devices, it is important not to overload electrical outlets, which may adversely affect others in the area. Portable space heater use may be restricted if there proves to be a problem in a particular location.
- Must be an Underwriters Laboratories, Inc. “Listed Heater” (look for the UL symbol on the bottom or back of the unit).
- The space heater must have a safety tip-over switch to turn the unit off if it is knocked over or tilted.
- Do not leave the space heater unattended and monitor periodically while in use.
- Maintain at least three feet (36”) of clearance on all sides of the unit from combustible materials (paper, wood, cloth, etc.).
- Do not place heaters under desk or other enclosed areas.
- Do not plug the heater into an extension cord or power strip. It should be plugged directly into a permanent wall outlet.
- Heater must be turned off when you leave your workspace.

If you have any questions or comments please feel free to contact Environmental Health & Safety at 362-6816. Reviewed 06/2011