

1018 USE AND PROHIBITION OF A SPACE HEATER

I Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for the limited use and prohibition of space heaters within the building structures of all Department of Human Services offices. This policy is applicable to all divisions of the Department of Human Services.

II Failure to Comply:

All Department of Human Services employees are subject to disciplinary action, as provided within DHS Policy 1084, Employee Discipline: Conduct/Performance, for failure to comply with this policy.

III Definitions:

- (a) Space Heater – A portable heating device used for warming the air of a single room, workspace, or other small area.
- (b) Medical Condition – A certified physician’s statement indicating:
 - (1) How a space heater is medically necessary as a medical treatment for the employee; and
 - (2) For how long such medical treatment is needed.
- (c) National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)– An organization formed to minimize the risk and effects of fire by establishing building standards and codes.
- (d) Nationally Recognized Testing Laboratories (NRTL) – Provide product safety testing and certification through Underwriters laboratory (UL), Intertex (ETL) and Canadian Standards Association (CSA).
- (e) Life Safety Code (NFPA 101) - A standard developed by the National Fire Protection Association that addresses fire protection measures regarding construction, egress, and occupancy.

IV Policy:

Space heater units pose an increased risk of fire that may result in the potential loss of human life and property. Space heater units may be used only as medically necessary by employees with a valid medical condition.

NOTE: If a conflict exists between this policy and the Life Safety Code, the Life Safety code takes precedence.

(a) Conditions for Obtaining a Space Heater:

Space heater units shall be temporarily permitted in office areas only after the following conditions have been met:

- (1) A written request to use a space heater must be submitted and approved by the employee's supervisor;
- (2) The employee must have an approved doctor's statement indicating the need for the space heater;
- (3) All space heater units must meet all National Recognized Testing Laboratories inspection requirements and bear the NRTL label;
- (4) Space heater units shall not have worn or damaged cords and plugs;
- (5) All space heater units shall have a low center of gravity and shall contain a mechanism whereby the heater shuts off automatically if tipped over; and
- (6) The amperage draw of the space heater shall not overload the electrical circuit intended to power the heater.

(b) Operational Guidelines for a Space Heater:

Authorized employees shall adhere to the following usage requirements:

- (1) Space heater units shall be plugged directly into an electrical outlet and not an outlet built into a cubicle. Do not use an extension cord, power strip, or surge protector.
- (2) Space heater units shall be turned off when an employee leaves their designated area and unplugged at the end of each business day.
- (3) All space heater units must be inspected by the employee weekly to insure that the unit is functioning properly.
- (4) Space heater units shall be placed a minimum of 3 feet from any combustible materials (e.g. paper, cloth, furniture, etc.) and in a well-ventilated area.

NOTE: Ceramic portable electrical space heater units may require less space based on manufacture's recommendations. Avoid using space heater units with filament wires.

- (5) Keep space heater units accessible. Do not place units under desks, in the means of egress (e.g. Doorways, hallways, corridors), or in any high traffic areas.

(c) Prohibition:

A permitted space heater unit shall be removed immediately if the employee violates any of the following conditions:

- (1) If the employee does not have an approved valid doctor's statement on file indicating the need for supplemental heat;
- (2) If the space heater unit does not bear the Nationally Recognized Testing Laboratories label on it;
- (3) If the space heater unit is being used for permanent heating;
- (4) If the space heater unit is found to be in poor operating condition, damaged or being used improperly; or
- (5) If the space heater unit is being used without thermostatic controls and automatic shutoff features.

(d) Supervisors Responsibilities:

- (1) Ensure that all Department of Human Services employees under their supervision have read and adhere to the policy;
- (2) Ensure that the Pre-Usage Space Heater Checklist has been completed; and
- (3) Require the removal of any space heater unit that is not in compliance with the Safety Precautions.

Department of Human Services

Pre-Usage Safety Checklist for Space Heater

All Space Heaters used within the Department of Human Services buildings must comply with DHS Policy 1018, Use and Prohibition of a Space Heater. The following checklist is being provided to ensure that all approved space heaters are in compliance with required safety precautions. If the space heater is found to be in non-compliance or damaged, the device must be immediately removed by the employee or supervisor.

Pre-Usage Safety Checklist	Yes	No
Does the employee have a doctor's statement which requires the use of a space heater?		
Does the heater bear a label from a NRTL certified laboratory which indicates the model has been evaluated and found to operate in a safe manner when manufacturer's instructions are followed?		
Does the heater contain a built-in circuit to shut-off if the appliance accidentally tips over?		
Does the heater have a low center of gravity to minimize the potential of tipping over?		
Is the heater plugged directly into an electrical outlet without the use of an extension cord?		
Is the heater located three (3) feet from combustible items such as paper, cloth(s) or furniture?		
Is the heater located in a well-ventilated area away from means of egress (doorways, paths of travel, corridors) and away from any high traffic area?		
Is the employee aware of the DHS Policy 1018, Use and Prohibition of a Space Heater, and the requirement that the heater must be turned off and unplugged daily when unattended?		
Does the employee understand that it is their responsibility to frequently inspect for worn cords and defective plugs?		