NORTHWEST MISSOURI STATE UNIVERSITY POLICY

Policy Name:	Portable Space Heaters
Effective Date:	July 1, 2026
Last Revision Date:	
Last Review Date:	
Approving Authority:	Northwest Leadership Team
Responsible Office:	Facility Services
Category:	Facility Services

Purpose

Establish and maintain guidelines for the use of portable space heaters.

Policy Statement

Portable space heaters, other than those provided for temporary supplemental heat by the Facility Services department, are prohibited.

Purpose/Scope

The use of portable space heaters can disrupt the normal operation of building HVAC systems, causing uncomfortable conditions for occupants and those in nearby spaces. For example, using a space heater in a room with a thermostat can cause the building's temperature control system to increase the flow of cool air to lower the temperature at the thermostat. The individual using the space heater will feel heat from the portable space heater and cool air from the supply diffuser in their room. Other occupants of the same zone will only feel cool air from the supply diffuser in their room. Thus, a space heater in a room with a zone thermostat can lower the temperature in the remaining spaces in that zone.

The conditioning of interior building spaces is programmed for a seasonal target range of 68–75 degrees Fahrenheit and a relative humidity of 20%-60%.

Employees who believe their work area is outside the seasonal target range should contact Facility Services by submitting a work order or calling 660-562-1183 for assistance. Facilities Services will test the temperature in any work area to determine whether it is within the seasonally set limits.

- Only if the temperature is lower than the seasonal target temperature during the heating season and cannot be adjusted within a reasonable period will Facility Services issue a space heater for temporary use in the work area.
- Facility Services will review the area and perform an electrical assessment to determine the best location and appropriate outlet for use.

- An issued portable space heater will remain in place until such time the system provides consistent temperature within the seasonal target range.

Safe Use of University-Provided Space Heaters

1. Portable electric space heaters shall be plugged directly into an electrical outlet. The use of any extension cord is strictly prohibited.

2. Portable electric space heaters shall be turned off and unplugged when not in use, and at the end of each business day.

3. Portable electric space heaters shall be placed at a minimum of three (3) feet from any combustible material and in a well-ventilated area.

4. To avoid potential burns, portable space heaters should be allowed to cool before moving.

5. Portable space heaters shall not be placed in any means of egress (exit path) or any high-traffic area.

6. The use of portable space heaters in laboratory spaces, or in any area where flammable liquids and gases are being used or stored, is prohibited.

7. Portable space heaters are not intended for use as permanent heating appliances. University-provided portable space heaters are only intended to temporarily supplement heating needs until a permanent solution is completed.

8. University-provided space heaters will be equipped with a thermostat, overheat protection, and tip-over shutoff device.

Unauthorized Portable Space Heater Removal Procedure

1. Prohibition

Personally owned or non-university-provided portable space heaters are prohibited in university facilities

2. Initial Notification

Upon identification of a non-compliant portable space heater, the university will provide email notice to the assigned occupant(s) of the space. The notice will:

- Identify the policy violation
- Request removal of the item
- Provide a deadline for voluntary compliance (typically 24–72 hours)
- Include contact information for questions or requests for accommodation

3. Follow-Up Notice (if needed)

If the item is not removed by the stated deadline, a second email notice may be issued indicating:

- The item remains in violation
- The university/Facility Services will remove the item if not corrected by a specified date

4. Administrative Removal

If the portable space heater is not removed within the stated timeframe, authorized university personnel (e.g., Facilities Services) will enter the space and remove the item. Removal will be conducted:

- In a reasonable and documented manner
- With care to avoid damage to personal property

5. Documentation

At the time of removal, the university will document through a Work Order:

- Date and time of removal
- Location where item was removed
- Description of the item
- Item to be retrieved at the University Police Department (per UPD Standard Operating Procedure 2:051 Recovered Property).

9. Immediate Removal for Safety Risks

If a portable space heater presents an immediate safety hazard, the university reserves the right to remove the item without prior notice. In such cases:

- Removal will be documented
- The employee will be notified as soon as practicable
- Item to be retrieved at at the University Police Department (per UPD Standard Operating Procedure 2:051 Recovered Property).