

Space Heater Safety

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) estimates that more than 100,000 residential fires are associated with the use of space heaters each year. The use of space heaters in University buildings is not recommended. Often, electrical circuits are not sized for the added load and circuit breakers trip. To correct heating problems, University personnel should contact the Physical Plant at 482-6440 or workorder@louisiana.edu.

When the use of space heaters is unavoidable, the CPSC offers these general suggestions for selection and safe use of space heaters:

- Only buy a space heater with a guard around the heating coil.
- Make sure the heater has been tested and labeled by a nationally recognized testing laboratory. Space heaters should have a “UL Approved” label on them.
- Read and follow the manufacturer’s operating instructions.
- Never use extension cords with space heaters. Plug the heater directly into the wall outlet.
- Never leave the space heater unattended or on overnight.
- Never use or store flammable liquids around a space heater (laboratories).
- Keep the space heater on a level surface while using it. Ensure that the space heater cannot tip over or otherwise lean against any material.
- Place heaters at least 3 feet away from objects such as bedding, furniture, drapes and curtains, paper products, boxes, and other combustible materials.
- Periodically check the space heater for proper operation. Pay attention to electrical cords, switches, and element guards. Have any repairs done by a qualified technician.

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