Health and Safety Guidance note

Safe use of temporary portable heating appliances - Workplaces

This guidance note provides information on the restrictions and safe use of portable heating appliances in University buildings.

The use of portable heating appliances represents a serious fire safety risk and should be discouraged at all locations. In certain circumstances some locations may require additional space heating in order to achieve a satisfactory thermal environment e.g. during extreme weather conditions or normal equipment failure.

Where portable heating appliances are used the following criteria must be met:

- Only portable electrical appliances should be used, e.g. oil filled electric radiators and not fan heaters or convector heaters. All electrical appliances must be Portable Appliance Tested (PAT) and be in good condition.

- Calor gas space heating or electric bar fires are not permitted.

- Personal equipment should not be brought in from home and used unless it has been inspected and PAT tested. (Note: For guidance on portable heaters in Halls of Residence, students should refer to the “Hall user guide 2013-2014 - Essential information” booklet. (Go to: http://www.lboro.ac.uk/services/campus-living/accommodation/fees-documents-forms/55734%20Hall%20User%20Guide%202013.pdf).

- The heater should be stable and should be sited so as to prevent burns from contact with hot surfaces.

- Portable heaters should be used on a temporary basis only. However, if required for an extended period, then the installation of a permanent wall or ceiling mounted heaters is acceptable. Furthermore, if portable heating is being used on a long term basis, the installation of fixed heating should be investigated.

- The heater must be regularly PAT tested and / or inspected. It must be identified on the portable electrical appliance register and, an in-date pass sticker, clearly displayed.

- Flammable or combustible materials should not be placed on or near the heater. Heaters must not be used for drying clothes.

- Any leads or extension cables must not present a trip hazard. Coiled extension cables must not be used. Only single socket extension must be used and not multi socket extensions. Extension cable must be PAT tested and / or visually inspected as well as correctly fuse rated for the appliance being powered.

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- Heaters must be turned off when the area is not occupied. Check that any timers or thermostats are operating correctly. The last person leaving the office must check that all heaters have been switched off or are unplugged.

- Additional vigilance and care should be undertaken where electrical space heating has been provided. E.g. ensuring fire doors are kept shut.

- Should a fire be discovered in relation to the electrical appliance:-
  - Sound the alarm
  - Switch off the appliance if it is safe to do so
  - Extinguish the fire, only if it is safe to do so. E.g. if it is a small fire and you have a clear escape route, and if staff are trained.
  - Evacuate the area by the nearest escape route and close the door to the room.

- Where University staff occupy a building not under the control of the University, advice regarding heating arrangements should be sought from those responsible for that building.

- Permission should be sought before acquiring or purchasing any space heating. Advice should be obtained from Facilities Management in relation to:
  - the current heating arrangements,
  - the impact upon the University Energy/Sustainability Policy, and,
  - the adequacy of the power supply to the room to support additional electrical space heating.

**Action Required**

- Disseminate information as required.
- Identify and remove any unauthorised or inappropriate heating appliances.
- Monitor compliance during routing safety inspections.
- Ensure equipment is in a safe condition and a suitable PAT testing regime is in place.
- Ensure that all new portable heaters brought into the University are preferably the oil filled electric radiator type. (Portable electric fan heaters and convector heaters are acceptable, but, oil filled radiators must be considered as the first option).

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