

University Policy: University Space Heater Policy

Policy Category: Operational Policies

Subject: University Space Heater Policy

Responsible Executive: Chief Financial Officer, Vice President & Treasurer

Office Responsible for Review of this Policy: Office of Finance and Treasurer

Procedures: N/A

Related University Policies: Facilities Management Building Temperature Policy

I. SCOPE

This policy establishes strict limitations on the use of portable space heaters in American University (AU) facilities by students, faculty, staff, tenants and guests in University-owned or controlled facilities.

II. POLICY STATEMENT

American University wishes to protect the safety of its students, faculty, staff, tenants, guests, and community members, while also maintaining the integrity of its facilities. To that end, the University strictly limits the use of portable space heaters in University-owned or controlled facilities. This policy will ensure that the safety objectives of AU are met in accordance with applicable standards, laws and regulations, and best practices. While safety is the foremost concern, this policy also considers factors necessary to balance the risks posed by portable space heaters with human comfort, productivity, and sustainability.

The use of these devices will require prior approval by Facilities Management staff. Only AU-provided devices will be permitted in University-owned or controlled facilities. The use of non AU-provided portable space heaters is strictly prohibited at AU.

III. POLICY PRACTICE

Portable space heaters present increased fire and safety risks to the entire University community, as well as to campus facilities. Portable space heaters often operate in a manner that is not energy efficient, compromise building energy management systems, and conflict with AU's carbon neutrality goals.

The Facilities Management Department and the Office of Risk Management strongly discourage portable space heater use in all University-owned or controlled facilities. This policy establishes guidelines to reduce the risks associated with the use of portable space heaters.

It is the responsibility of Facilities Management to maintain temperatures in buildings in accordance with the AU Temperature Policy. For reference, AU has established standard seasonal set point targets as follows: Winter 70°F (+/-2°), and Summer 76°F (+/-2°).

When University students, faculty, staff, tenants or community members experience room temperatures inconsistent with this policy in University-owned or controlled facilities, he or she may contact a department representative, who shall submit a repair ticket via Facilities x2fix in accordance with the appropriate normal or emergency procedures established by Facilities Management.

When the Facilities Management team cannot correct such non-compliant temperature conditions in an appropriate manner, such that room temperatures in University-owned or controlled facilities fall below the established set point range, the Facilities Management Zone Supervisors shall have the authority to authorize and provide one or more space heaters for temporary use in the non-compliant spaces.

All students, faculty, staff, tenants and guests thereof, are responsible for complying with this policy.

Guidelines are available within Facilities Management for temporary space heaters:

- authorization & management
- safe deployment and operation
- policy monitoring, oversight, and reporting

IV. POLICY APPLICABILITY

1. This policy applies to the use of portable space heaters in indoor settings (offices, workshops, etc.) within American University-owned or controlled buildings.
2. This policy is meant to outline the minimum requirements for the use of portable space heaters. The local fire inspector may further restrict use of portable space heaters per local fire code or ordinance.
3. **This policy does NOT apply to the following:**
 - i. Temporary use of portable heaters for construction, outdoor settings, or industrial/research support applications -Use in these circumstances should be governed by the work hazard planning process in place on campus or at the University-owned or controlled facility.
 - ii. Non-portable area heaters that are wired or plumbed into the building utilities by the Facilities Management Department or included in building construction projects for University-owned or controlled facilities.

V. APPROVAL

If you have any questions regarding the use of portable space heaters in University-owned or controlled facilities, please contact Facilities Management.

VI. FREQUENCY OF REVIEW AND UPDATE

Facilities Management will initiate review and update this policy not more than 5 years from the effective date, or the date of last review or update, whichever is most recent.

VI. EFFECTIVE DATE AND REVISIONS:

This policy is effective as of August 1, 2019, enforcement shall be phased in fully by October 15, 2019.