

Building, Land and Estate Strategy Sub-committee

PORTABLE ELECTRIC HEATER POLICY

FORWARD

The use of **unauthorised portable electric heaters** is **prohibited** throughout **ALL** University properties.

Please refer to the General Health & Safety Manual (4.4.1), which states '*no one may use in the University any **electrical heating device** other than one provided or approved by the University, and under conditions prescribed by the University*'.

Employees and students are therefore responsible for disconnecting and removing any unauthorised portable electric heater from a University property.

The use of portable electric heaters is only permissible with authorisation from the Estates & Facilities Department. When identified, unauthorised and/or non-PAT tested portable electric heaters may be rendered inoperable by Estates & Facilities engineers.

MOTIVATIONS

Health & Safety

Due to the common hazards associated with portable electric heaters, all must comply with the Electricity at Work Regulations to ensure they are safe to use and must be subjected to a portable appliance test (PAT) before first use and at period intervals thereafter.

Common hazards include:

- Electric shocks from poor insulating cable
- Fire from overloading of local electricity circuit, overheating of unwound cables and mechanical damage
- Explosion from excessive currents or prolonged use
- Trips and falls over insulating cable

PAT testing is the responsibility of individual academic schools and departments. Further details of these requirements can be obtained from Safety Services.

Overloading Electrical Circuitry

As well as being a potential health and safety hazard, great disruption is caused to University activities when private portable electrical heaters overload local electrical circuitry. This is an increasingly common problem!

Electrical Energy Release Significant Carbon Dioxide (CO₂)

Electric heating is used reluctantly throughout the University as the generation of electricity releases significantly higher emissions of CO₂ to the atmosphere than other forms of heating.

Electrical Energy is Expensive

Portable electrical heaters are costly to run, with electric heating being seven times more expensive than gas boiler heating.

Portable Electric Heaters Override Building Energy Systems

Heating in the majority of University buildings is managed using thermostatically controlled boilers. Thermostats are located at various points within each building to ensure a comfortable heating temperature is maintained throughout.

As the use of portable electric heaters artificially raises the temperature, they can trick local thermostats in to **switching off** the heating system in your room or floor and in some cases the entire building.

REPORTING HEATING PROBLEMS

All academic and office heating problems should be reported to the Estates & Facilities Help-desk, ext 3001 for University engineers to investigate and remedy the heating problem.

Authorisation for portable electric heaters will be granted when:

1. Additional heat is needed in support of a building heating system to maintain comfortable office temperatures (19°C to 21°C)
2. Temporary heating is required due to a failure in a building heating system

Where portable heaters are authorised by Estates & Facilities, timers may be fitted.