

Heating Up In Cool Weather

Now that cooler weather has arrived, this is a good time for a reminder about the use of space heaters as an alternative heat source at OHSU. Radiant-type space heaters are allowed in some buildings including most research and academic buildings. However, space heaters are **prohibited** in all OHSU Healthcare facilities including: OHS, KPV, HRC, DCH, MNP, SJH, PPV, CHH and all off-site clinics.



Open element (glowing wire) heaters are not permitted in **ANY** building. These are dangerous from a fire safety perspective and are inefficient.

The potential for misuse of space heaters is one of the

most significant fire safety issues that arise during the heating season. Fires caused by space heaters are often not caused by product defects but by how the heater was used and operated. Typical misuses of space heaters that lead to fires include the following:

- Use of damaged power cords, constricted power cords (resistance heat build-up), extension cords, and faulty plugs.
- Electrical overloading on receptacles and branch circuits.
- Failure to maintain safe clearance from combusti-

Call OHSU's Weather Hotline for current conditions: 503-494-9021

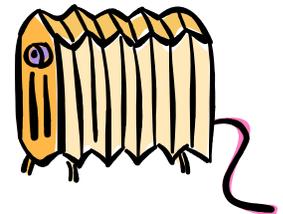
SafetyNews Questions or suggestions?

Environmental Health & Radiation Safety: 503-494-7795

ble furnishings and materials to the space heater. In most cases, a minimum recommended clearance is at least 36 inches from adjacent Class A ordinary combustibles such as cardboard, paper and fabrics.

- Unattended use of a space heater for a continuous period of time.
- Physical damage to the heater itself during use. Some of these have been around for years and gotten banged up.

For more information about space heaters in healthcare areas please reference the [Portable Space Heater Policy](#).



Be safe this heating season and call EHRS at 4-7795 for additional guidance.

Decorating by the Book

OHSU's Holiday Décor Policy



Familiar with the OHSU Holiday Decorations Safety Policy? If you enjoy festive decorations in your area during the holiday season, this is a must read! You'll find all the details to guide you regarding safe placement, condition of electrical decorations, and observance of Fire Codes and best practices for fire safety.



You'll find the most current policy along with others at:

<http://www.ohsu.edu/xd/about/services/integrity/policies/ehrs.cfm>



Topic of the Month:

GOOD HAND CARE

The leading cause of hand irritation at work is skin rash. A few of the more common causes include: overexposure to water, dry air, soaps and detergents, solvents, cleaning agents, latex, and ingredients in skin care products. Healthcare, research, and employees in all areas can benefit from good hand health precautions.

Hand Washing

Remove rings prior to washing hands since they trap soap and moisture next to the skin. Use warm water, wash with soap 15 seconds, and rinse thoroughly. Apply moisturizer soon after towel drying hands to retain the most moisture in your skin.



Use small quantities of soap, since soap strips natural oils from skin. These oils help your skin retain moisture. Avoid detergents and perfumed or deodorant soaps, as these may actually irritate skin. Regardless of the type of soap used, frequent hand washing will cause increased skin dryness.

Hand Sanitizer



Hand sanitizers are a good alternative to hand washing, unless your hands are visibly soiled. (If so, you must wash dirt away with soap and water.) Rub hand sanitizers over skin surfaces until dry. The product approved for use in OHSU Healthcare is Avagard D (available from Logistics).

Lotions and Moisturizers

If hand or forearm skin becomes irritated, lotion should be used after hand washing. The only lotion approved for use in OHSU Healthcare is Cavillon (also available from Logistics). Other lotions may be used in non-clinical areas and while away from work.



Apply moisturizers liberally after hand washing and immediately after bathing for best moisture retention. When selecting moisturizers, the simpler and messier the better

(think petroleum jelly)! Water-based moisturizers are usually the least effective.

Gloves

Nitrile, plastic, and vinyl are easier on hands than latex. Powder-free is less likely to irritate than powdered gloves. Just make sure that you have the right glove to protect you from chemicals and/or biologicals you use. If in doubt, seek advice from Environmental Health & Radiation Safety.



Stretching

If you use your hands for fine detail work (e.g. - typing, surgery, handwriting, etc.), it is important that you take breaks to stretch your hands and wrists. Go through a full range of gentle motions, including flexion, extension, and rotation. These will keep muscles and joints warmed and ready to perform! See suggested stretches on the next page.



Other Precautions

- Wear gloves when peeling or pressing oranges, lemons, grapefruits, tomatoes, peppers, or onions.
- Avoid skin contact with solvents, stain removers, fuels, and cleaning products.
- Don't pick at loose skin or cuticles. These are best trimmed using a sharp nail clipper or scissors.

Questions?

Good hand care is essential to preserve your ability to remain comfortable while working. If hands remain dry or irritated for more than a couple of days and attempts to soothe and repair them fail, consult Employee Health at 503-494-5271.

Employee Health on the Ozone:

<http://ozone.ohsu.edu/employeehealth/>

Holiday Safety at Home

Many of us decorate our homes to celebrate the season, but it is important to give consideration to common safety hazards:

Lights & Electric

- As you pull lights out of storage, check for frayed wires and broken bulbs. Make sure they're approved for outdoor use.
- Plug only as many light strands into one cord or circuit as recommended. Follow manufacturer's recommendations or consult an electrician.
- When stringing outside lights, keep ladders and decorations away from overhead power lines.
- Do not use metal staples or nails as fasteners for lights.
- Don't run electric extension cords across driveways or where people may trip on them.



Fire & Combustion

- If you choose to have a real tree indoors, use a stand with a built-in water reservoir and make sure to keep it full.
- The drier a tree or decorative greenery is, the more combustible it becomes. After the holidays put these out for recycle before they become dry. (This also saves extra clean-up of all those little needles!)
- Never leave candles unattended. When candles are lit, make sure a responsible person is in the room. When you leave or go to sleep, blow them out.
- Always keep open flames away from all combustibles such as drapes, paper, and walls. Remember, concentrated heat rises and poses a hazard.



For a current issue of SafetyNews online, and for archives, visit:

<http://www.ohsu.edu/xd/about/services/integrity/ehrs/safety/gen/safetynews.cfm>

The SafetyTeam page is available at:

<http://www.ohsu.edu/xd/about/services/integrity/ehrs/safety/gen/safeteam.cfm>

These pages are updated regularly. If there are OHSU resources you'd like to see linked, please send suggestions to the SafetyTeam Coordinator at:

safeteam@ohsu.edu

Systems Thinking: Safety Tip!

This example shows the value of a culture of safety. Injuries can be prevented when people are encouraged to take the time to act safely.

Employee: "I was placing a receipt on the receipt spindle when it started to fall. When I tried to catch the falling spindle, it punctured my hand. I washed it and called our Safety Coordinator. She sent me to employee health where my immunization records were checked. I was given antibiotic cream and a Band-Aid."

Supervisor: "This was an accidental occurrence. It is possible to add a safety tip to the spindle. The safety tip is now on order."

An incident such as this could be repeated by other staff.



It was determined that this was a random accident. Taking a moment to examine the physical conditions of the incident and research options can lead to a safer environment. The supervisor's solution of a safety cap on the spindle dramatically improves safe handling of receipts.

Questions? Ask Environmental Health & Radiation Safety:

503-494-7795

