



MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™  
EXTENSION

# MSU DAWG TRACKS

Space heaters and other types of portable heaters are a great way to heat a single room, or supplement a building's main heating system, or even make outdoor activities more comfortable when temperatures are colder than normal. However, precautions must be taken to ensure their safe use.

No matter if you are using an electric, propane or fuel fired space heater, either indoors or outdoors, the most important safety precautions are to...

✓ **KEEP HEATERS 3 FEET AWAY FROM ANYTHING THAT CAN BURN**

Upholstered furniture

Bedding

Curtains

Clothing

Insulation

Cardboard

Papers

✓ **TURN HEATERS OFF WHEN YOU LEAVE THE AREA**

Unplug electric cords

Turn off propane cylinders

Realizing that some buildings may not be insulated good, may have undersized heating equipment, or the simple fact that different folks have varied body temperature standards, portable heaters may be needed. However, we must practice the safety tips that can greatly reduce the risk of possible deaths, injuries, or loss of property.

For more info contact:


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Risk Mgmt./Loss Control

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MSU policy 95.502 has established the following requirements for the use of portable, electric space heaters within its facilities:

- Heater must be Underwriter's Laboratory (UL) listed and labeled. 
- In good working condition. Never operate a heater you suspect is damaged. Before use, inspect the heater, cord, and plug for damage. Follow all manufacturer operation and maintenance instructions.
- Equipped with a safety "tip-over" shut-off feature. Ensure that the heater is placed on a stable, level surface, and located where it will not be knocked over.
- Plugged directly into a hard-wired electric wall outlet. Only the power cord supplied with the unit may be used. Extension cords or power strips must not be used under any circumstance. Never run the heater's cord under rugs or carpeting. This can damage the cord, causing it and nearby objects to burn. To prevent electric shocks and electrocutions, always keep electric heaters away from water, and never touch an electric heater if you are wet.
- Positioned a minimum of three feet from any combustible material. Keep combustible material such as beds, sofas, curtains, papers, and clothes at least 3 feet from the front, sides, and rear of the heater. This requirement prohibits the placement of a portable, electric space heater under one's desk.
- Continuously under supervision. The unit must never be left unattended. It must be unplugged, not just turned off, anytime you leave your work area.

**Sources:**

[www.nfpa.org](http://www.nfpa.org)

<https://www.policies.msstate.edu/sites/www.policies.msstate.edu/files/95502.pdf>