

Safe use of temporary portable heating appliances

This guidance note provides information on the restrictions and safe use of portable heating appliances in Shropshire Council buildings. Portable heaters should only be used on a temporary basis as they increase the fire safety risk and will need to be managed at all locations.

If additional heating is required on a long-term basis, the installation of fixed heating should be investigated.

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

- All portable heating appliances **must be** registered with the building/premise manager before use.
- In selecting portable electrical appliances, it is preferable to purchase oil filled electric radiators rather than fan heaters or convector heaters.
- All portable heating appliances must be in good condition.
- Electrical appliances **must be** Portable Appliance Tested (PAT) and must be identified on the portable electrical appliance register. An in-date pass sticker must be clearly displayed.
- Portable heating appliances **must be** visually inspected prior to each use to ensure that they are in good working condition.
- The heater **must be** stable and should be sited to prevent burns from contact with hot surfaces and sited away from combustible materials
- Calor gas space heating is not permitted in office areas.
- Electric bar fires are not permitted anywhere on Council property.
- Extension cables **must** also be PAT tested and visually inspected as well as fitted with the correctly rated fuse for the appliance being used.
- 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/workplace 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.
- Personal electrical equipment should not be brought in from home and used unless it has first been inspected, PAT tested and registered with the building/premise manager before use.
- Flammable or combustible materials must not be placed on or near the heater. Heaters **must not** be used for drying clothes. Do not obstruct air grilles on portable heaters as this may cause a fire.
- Any leads or extension cables **must not** present a trip hazard. Coiled extension cables must not be used i.e. the cable should be fully off the reel before use. Only single socket extension must be used and not multi socket extensions.

Should a fire be discovered in relation to the heating appliance: -

1. Sound the alarm
2. Switch off the appliance if it is safe to do so
3. 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, are trained and have the correct fire extinguisher.
4. Evacuate the area by the nearest escape route and close the door to the room.

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

Note for all staff members:

Permission should be sought before acquiring or purchasing any space heating for use in the office environment. Advice should be obtained from Facilities Management in relation to:

- the current heating arrangements,
- the impact upon the Council's Energy/Sustainability Policy, and,
- the adequacy of the power supply to the room to support additional electrical space heating.

Reviewed by Health & Safety Team

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