

## **Shropshire Council – Portable Heater - Policy Guidance note**

### **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.

The use of portable heating appliances presents a fire safety risk that will need to be managed at all locations.

Shropshire Council acknowledges this risk and aims to adopt a proactive approach to minimise the risk of fire caused by using portable heaters.

In certain circumstances, some locations may require additional space heating to achieve a satisfactory thermal environment e.g. during extreme weather conditions or normal equipment failure.

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.
- Only portable electrical appliances should be used in office areas, e.g. oil filled electric radiators are preferable to fan heaters or convector heaters.
- Calor gas space heating is not permitted in office areas.
- Electric bar fires are not permitted in any Shropshire Council controlled workplace.
- All portable heating appliances must be in good condition, tested and within test date.
- All 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- Flammable or combustible materials should 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. Only single socket extension must be used and not multi socket extensions.
- Extension cable must be PAT tested and visually inspected as well as fitted with the correctly rated fuse for the appliance being used.
- Portable heaters should only be used on a temporary basis only. However, if required to be used on a long-term basis, the installation of fixed heating should be investigated.

- 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.

**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.

**Actions Required:**

- Disseminate information to team managers as required.
- Identify, isolate and remove any unauthorised or inappropriate heating appliances.
- Monitor compliance during routing safety inspections.
- Ensure equipment is in a safe condition and PAT tested.
- Ensure that all new portable heaters brought into the Council's buildings are preferably the oil filled electric radiator type. (Portable electric fan heaters and convector heaters are acceptable, but oil filled radiators must be considered as the preferred option) and are tested and registered with the premises / building manager.

**PAT Testing**

If a portable electrical heater requires PAT testing please contact Facilities Management on 01743 252895. A cost centre and subjective code will be required.

**Please note: the use of any portable heater that is fuelled by kerosene or that produces open flame is strictly prohibited at the Shirehall.**