



SAFETY MATTERS

WINTER HEATING (PORTABLE SPACE HEATERS)

When the weather turns cold, it can bring a chill into our classrooms, offices and homes. Portable space heaters have become a popular way to supplement central heating or heat just one room. According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), **two in five deaths** in space heater fires involve portable electric space heaters. Space heaters pose a high risk and have a much greater potential for accidental fires. If you plan to use a portable electric space heaters at **home** (or at work only after receiving prior approval from administration), follow these tips:

- ✓ Purchase a heater with the seal of a qualified testing laboratory.
- ✓ Confirm that the unit is in good working order (3-pronged plug, no exposed wires on cord).
- ✓ Plug the heater directly into the wall outlet. Do not plug another electrical device or an extension cord into the same outlet as a heater (that can cause overheating).
- ✓ Keep the heater at least 3 feet away from anything that can burn, including people.
- ✓ Place the heater on a solid, flat surface. Make sure the heater has an auto shut-off to turn the heater off if it tips over or is over-heated.
- ✓ Keep space heaters out of the way of foot traffic. **Never block an exit!**
- ✓ Keep children or students away from the space heater.
- ✓ Turn off and unplug space heaters when you leave the room.

**RISK MANAGEMENT
& HEALTH BENEFITS
DEPARTMENT**

