Portable Electric Heater Safety Requirements for Office and Home

As the cold weather approaches, employees may tend to utilize portable electric heaters. While they can be an efficient way to warm a work space and supplement central heating, portable electric heaters can also be a fire or electric shock hazard if not used properly. If you follow these rules, compiled from the Atlantic County Office of Fire Safety and other colleges nationwide, they will help you in using your portable heater safely.

- Portable electric heaters shall be listed and approved by Underwriter’s Laboratories, Inc. (UL) or Factory Mutual (FM). These heaters are tested to meet specific safety standards, and manufacturers are required to provide important use and care information to the consumer.

- **Unlisted heaters are not permitted as consumers have less assurance that safety features and operating instructions are adequate.**

- Portable electric heaters should be the fail-safe types, which are equipped with an automatic tip-over safety shut-off switch.

- **Older style heaters with exposed glowing red radiant wires are not permitted.**

- Portable electric heaters should be placed at least 3 feet (1 meter) away from paper, garbage and recycling containers, furniture, clothing, or anything else that can burn. Please pay particular attention to the clearances as recommended by the manufacturer.

- Never leave your electric heater running when you leave your work area. They are designed to be used only while attended.
• To prevent electrical shocks and electrocutions, always keep portable electric heaters away from water. And never touch an electric heater if you are wet.

• Do not use an electric heater to dry clothing such as gloves, scarves, hats or jackets as these materials may catch on fire when placed over a heater.

• Plug portable heaters directly into a wall outlet. **Do not plug a space heater into a surge protector, multi-outlet box or extension cord.** The high current flow can cause components to deteriorate, leading to a breakdown of solder joints eventual failure of the multi-box outlet, and excessive heating that can cause fire.

• Do not extend the electric cord of the heater through wall openings, under doors or floor coverings. Arrange the cord away from traffic areas where it will not be tripped over or otherwise subject to damage.

• Do not operate an electric heater with a damaged cord or plug. Inspect the power cord regularly, and never use a heater with a damaged cord.

• Unplug the heater by pulling the plug straight from the outlet. Check periodically for a secure plug/outlet fit. If the plug does not fit snugly into the outlet or if the plug becomes very hot, the outlet may need to be replaced.

• Do not plug any other electrical device into the same outlet as your heater. This could result in overheating.

**STAY SAFE**