

HAZARD ALERT

Portable Electric Heaters in Office (under desks)

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Hazard Summary

Office temperatures may be cooler in winter months causing people to bring portable electric heaters to work. The heaters are placed under desks in order to provide additional warmth.

There are several safety concerns associated with this practice:

- Keeping plenty of clearance from materials that could catch fire,
- Overloading circuits, or using extension cords that don't have the proper power rating or using power bars that are already loaded with electrical items,
- No cover or protection in front of the heating element,
- Using worn cords.

The use of portable electric heaters, as an addition to the regular heating, should be considered a last resort.

Preventive Measures

- Before using a portable electric heater contact building maintenance to see if there is a problem and if it can be corrected by them.
- Get supervisor/employer agreement before using a heater.
- The heater should be a radiant heater not more than 200 watts.
- The heater should have no fans or moving parts and be approved by Canadian Standards Association (CSA) or similar.
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions.
- Turn the heater off when away from it.
- Plug heater directly into a wall or cubicle electrical outlet.

Example of recommended under desk heater style

