

**Institutional Handbook of Operating Procedures**  
**Policy 08.01.19**

Section: Health, Safety, and Security	Responsible Vice President: Executive Vice President of Business and Finance
Subject: Health and Safety	Responsible Entity: Environmental Health and Safety

**I. Title**

*Portable Heating and Cooking Devices*

**II. Policy**

The use of any [portable open element heating device](#), including but not limited to: space heaters, area/room heaters, drink warmers, hot plates, open element (toaster) ovens and any similar items, are expressly prohibited in all buildings owned or leased by the University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston (UTMB).

Specific, approved UTMB-owned space heaters such as certain makes of oil filled space heaters are permitted under extenuating conditions; however, they must be provided by Property Services by contacting the UTMB Service Request line at ext. 24040.

UTMB is committed to maintaining a safe environment that complies with all life safety and fire safety regulations. Portable heating devices pose serious fire and electrical hazards which threaten the safety of UTMB occupants and property.

Any planned deviation from this policy will require prior approval from Environmental Health and Safety-(EHS) Fire and Life Safety.

NOTE: Coffee makers are not included in the intent of this policy.

**Scope**

This policy applies to all owned and leased properties of UTMB Health and applies to all employees, students, patients, and visitors.

This policy does not apply to laboratory areas utilizing typical, standard laboratory equipment which is also a heat producing device (e.g. Bunsen burners, lab hot plates, other lab equipment) for institutional purposes.

**Responsibility**

It is the responsibility of all supervisors to ensure compliance with this policy.

All employees, faculty, students, and volunteers are responsible for:

- ensuring no portable heating devices are located or used in any buildings owned or leased by UTMB.
- reporting any use of a portable heating devices on properties owned or maintained by UTMB to EHS.
- dressing appropriately for the weather.
- contacting the UTMB Service Response Line at ext. 24040 to report areas that are too hot or too cold.

- maintaining electrical devices in a clean, operable condition. For example, toasters etc. are cleaned on a regular basis (i.e. weekly) to prevent debris accumulation and fires.
- operating cooking equipment that produces heat in an appropriate manner by:
  - monitoring the food while it is cooking; do not leave unattended
  - using only the power/heat setting necessary for the task
  - using cooking equipment only for its intended purpose (e.g. do not warm towels in microwave ovens).

Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) is responsible for:

- monitoring compliance with this policy
- ordering the removal of or remove any portable heating devices found in violation of this policy
- following up on any reports of portable heating devices use on properties owned or maintained by UTMB

The assumed need for portable heating devices to provide adequate warmth may indicate a malfunction of the central heating and cooling system and should be brought to the immediate attention of UTMB Property Services by calling ext. 24040.

**III. Related UTMB Policies and Procedures**

[IHOP - 08.03.01 - Resource Conservation Policy](#)

[IHOP - 03.01.06 - Personal Appearance](#)

**IV. Dates Approved or Amended**

<i>Originated:</i> 11/14/2006	
<i>Reviewed with Changes</i>	<i>Reviewed without Changes</i>
01/05/2012	11/21/2016
06/30/2020	

**V. Contact Information**

Environmental Health and Safety, Fire and Life Safety Department  
 (409) 747-0515