

**San Bernardino County
Department of Behavioral Health**

Electrical Safety Policy: Personal Appliances

Effective Date 07/94
Approval Date 10/29/14  CaSonya Thomas, Director

Policy It is the policy of the Department of Behavioral Health (DBH) to acquaint staff with the policy and procedure regarding the use of personal electrical equipment, appliances and other applicable electrical devices.

Purpose To ensure that staff are following safety requirements, in an office setting, while using personal electrical appliances and equipment, extension cords, adapters and other electrical devices in compliance with the County of San Bernardino requirements.

Definitions **Heating Device:** Any portable electric or battery powered device or apparatus meant for the heating of a limited or enclosed area, also known as space heaters.

Personal Appliances: Any device or piece of equipment owned by an employee, usually operated electrically, meant for personal use and/or comfort.

Safety Guidelines for Heating Devices All members of the DBH workforce shall be familiar with the basic principles of electricity and general guidelines for injury reduction or avoidance. Electrical safety-related work practices cover both qualified persons (those who have training in avoiding the electrical hazards of working on or near exposed energized parts) and unqualified persons (those with little or no such training).

The DBH workforce shall adhere to the following general workplace electrical safety instructions for heating electrical devices, which can be used upon appropriate approval:

- Electric space heaters must be Underwriters Laboratories (UL) approved and equipped with a proper grounding, a tip switch and an automatic shut-off device.
 - Electric space heaters shall not be plugged into electrical outlets found on a panel-hung furniture, cubicle outlets, or outlet strips on the same circuit as a computer.
 - Space heaters are not to be stored or operated near any combustible materials such as boxes, paper, towels, and plastic or left on overnight. Combustible materials are to be kept at least three (3) feet away from the space heater.
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Safety Guidelines for Heating Devices (Continued)

- Electric space heaters shall be plugged into a permanent, 3-pronged outlet only.

Note: Buildings with closed climate-controlled systems may experience indoor climate variances by additional heating sources, such as space heaters. This can affect building thermostat systems, resulting in possible areas with inadequate heat. In such cases, the comfort of fellow employees must be taken into consideration.

Safety Guidelines for Personal Appliances

The DBH workforce shall adhere to the following general workplace electrical safety instructions for personal electrical appliances owned by the employee, and to be used upon appropriate approval:

- All personal electrical appliances or devices, including but not limited to coffee pots, clocks, radios, fans, water coolers or adapters, must be UL approved and have their symbol or UL designation attached.
- All personal electrical appliances must be used in a safe manner and in a manner consistent with its designed purpose.
- Use of UL approved extension cords are designed for temporary solutions to extend power and are not intended for long-term use. Avoid using extension cords unless absolutely necessary.
- Coffee makers must be equipped with an automatic shut-off device feature and may be used only in a properly equipped and approved break area or designated kitchenette space.

Note: Buildings that are under lease agreements may have additional electrical appliance use guidelines and/or restrictions imposed by the building owner or landlord. Employees must inquire with their Building Manager on such guidelines and/or restrictions.

Prohibited

The following is prohibited within any DBH occupied building and/or facility:

- Space heaters are prohibited from any facility not protected by fire sprinklers.
 - Use of heaters, and other personal electronic appliance, is prohibited unless approved because of a workplace accommodation or other medical restrictions. Employees requesting such accommodations must contact Human Resources to commence the Interactive Process.
 - Personal electrical appliances, including but not limited to, mug warmers, potpourri warmers, wax warmers, refrigerators, and plug-in fragrance warmers are prohibited.
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Electrical Safety Policy: Personal Appliances, Continued

Prohibited
(continued)

- Coffee makers which are equipped with a hot plate to keep coffee warm may not be used in a private office or workstation (cubicle), or plugged into electrical outlets found on panel-hung furniture or cubicle outlets.
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Questions

For questions regarding this safety policy, contact the DBH Office of Disaster and Safety at safety@dbh.sbcounty.gov or 909-388-0875.

References

California Code of Regulations, [Title 8, Division 1, Chapter 4, Subchapter 7, Section 3203](#)
San Bernardino County [Employee Safety and Health Manual, Section 22, Electrical](#)

Related Policy

DBH Standard Practice Manual:

- SFT7021: [Employee General Safety Policy](#)
