



Electrical Safety Policy: Personal Appliances

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Signed by:

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Policy It is the policy of the Department of Behavioral Health (DBH) to implement and maintain safe practices for the use of electrical equipment, personal appliances, and other electrical devices, as applicable.

Purpose To ensure the DBH workforce working within DBH facilities complies with electrical safety requirements established by Cal/OSHA and the County of San Bernardino Risk Management, thereby preventing injury or death resulting from the misuse of electrical equipment and appliances, including, but not limited to electrical shock, building/ facility fires, and other electrical hazards associated with prohibited items.

Definitions **Air Purifier:** An electrical appliance that draws in indoor air, filters the air, and circulates purified air back into the room.

DBH Workforce: Staff employed by and/or working for DBH. This includes full-time, contracted, temporary, interning, and work experience staff.

Electrical Appliances: Items or equipment that require an electrical connection or power source that performs specific domestic, commercial, or industrial tasks.

Heating Device: An electrical appliance that is designed to generate, raise, or maintain temperature by adding thermal energy to a designated space, fluid, or material.

Personal Appliances: Electrical appliances that are small, portable, electrically or battery-powered devices designed for highly specific individual tasks for an individual's personal care, hygiene, grooming, and/or comfort.

Portable Heater: A heating device with the purpose of heating the surrounding air in a designated space.

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Electrical Safety Policy: Personal Appliances, Continued

General Safety Guidelines to Prevent Electric Shock

All members of DBH workforce working within DBH facilities shall be familiar with general electrical safety guidelines to prevent injury from electrical shock. Electrical safety-related work practices cover both qualified persons (those who have training in avoiding 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 safety instructions within the workplace and out in the field:

- All personal appliances and electrical appliances must be Underwriters Laboratories (U.L.) approved.
- Always grab the plug when removing an electrical device from an outlet; never pull the electrical device by the wire or cord.
- Any heating device requiring electrical power shall be plugged into a permanent, 3-pronged wall outlet only.
- Extension cords are not allowed in DBH facilities.
- Flexible cords must not be fastened by staples, hung from nails, or suspended by wire.
- Heating devices 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.
- Keep all power cords away from walking areas, to prevent tripping hazards.
- Lamps for general illumination must be protected from breakage, and metal shell sockets must be grounded.
- U.L. approved multiplug outlets with maximum 15-amp fuse are acceptable.
- Use battery-powered tools as much as possible, especially when working outdoors.
- Temporary lights must not be suspended by their cords, unless they are designed to.
- This use of worn or frayed electrical cords or cables are strictly prohibited.

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Electrical Safety Policy: Personal Appliances, Continued

Guidelines for Personal Appliance Usage

Approval from Facilities Project Management (FPM) is required prior to the installation and use of any personal appliance involving food or beverages. Such appliances may only be installed and used only in designated facility breakrooms. Such appliances are strictly prohibited in cubicles, conference rooms, offices, and all other non-breakroom areas.

This requirement applies to the following personal appliances, including but not limited to:

- Blenders and/or fruit juicers
 - Coffee makers (must be equipped with an automatic shut-off feature)
 - Electric kettles
 - Ice machines
 - Microwaves
 - Refrigerators
 - Toasters and/or toaster ovens
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Safety Guidelines for Fans

All members of DBH workforce working within DBH facilities shall adhere to safe practices when using personal appliances. The following requirements apply to the use of personal fans for comfort:

- All fans, regardless of type, must be U.L. certified.
 - Desk fans must be battery-operated, powered via a Universal Serial Bus (USB) connection, or powered by USB through a charging block.
 - Floor fans may only be plugged into a designated wall outlet or U.L. certified multi-plug outlet.
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Human Resources Approved Personal Appliances

Personal air purifiers, personal portable heaters, and personal refrigerators may only be authorized through a medical accommodation request. DBH workforce members must obtain approval from DBH Human Resources (HR) by providing appropriate medical documentation for the requested item.

Upon HR approval, Facilities Project Management (FPM) will review the request and the facility's leasing contract to determine whether the item is permitted at the workforce member's work location. If approved, FPM will verify that the item meets applicable safety standards and will install the approved item for the employee. If the requested item is prohibited under the facility's lease agreement, approval will be denied and the item may not be installed or used within the facility. The workforce member may follow up with their direct supervisor for further guidance.

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Electrical Safety Policy: Personal Appliances, Continued

Human Resources Approved Personal Appliances, continued

The following guidelines must be followed when installing a fully approved personal appliance:

- Personal Air Purifiers, Personal Portable Heaters, or Personal Refrigerators must be U.L. approved.
- Personal Air Purifiers, Personal Portable Heaters, or Personal Refrigerators must be plugged into a designated wall outlet.
- Personal Portable Heaters must be equipped with proper grounding, a tip-over switch, and an automatic shut-off feature.
- Personal Portable Heaters must not be stored or operated near combustible materials, including boxes, paper, towels, or plastic. All combustible materials must be kept at least three (3) feet away from the space heater.
- Personal Portable Heaters and Personal Air Purifiers must be turned off when workforce members are not present in their workspace and may not be operated overnight.

Note: DBH facilities with closed climate-controlled systems may experience indoor temperature variances caused by additional heating sources, such as portable heaters. These variations can affect building thermostat systems and may result in areas receiving inadequate heat. In such cases, consideration must be given to the comfort of fellow workforce members.

Prohibited Personal Appliances

The following items are prohibited within any DBH-occupied building or facility, including but not limited to:

- Fish tanks or running-water decorative devices
 - Gas-powered appliances
 - Desk lamps that are not approved as a workplace accommodation through HR
 - Humidifiers or diffusers
 - Inflatable decorations requiring a power source for inflation
 - Personal portable heaters not approved by HR and FPM
 - Personal portable heaters in facilities not protected by fire sprinklers
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Electrical Safety Policy: Personal Appliances, Continued

Prohibited Personal Appliances, continued

- Any other heat-emitting device not listed above, including, but not limited to:
 - Air fryers
 - Christmas lights (except battery-operated lights)
 - Crock Pots/slow cookers
 - Fairy lights (except battery-operated lights)
 - Heated blankets
 - Heated hand warmers
 - Hot Plates
 - Mug or cup warmers
 - Nacho machines
 - Popcorn machines
 - Plug in-fragrances
 - Potpourri warmers
 - Pressure cookers
 - Rice cookers
 - Tabletop greenhouses
 - Wax warmers (including lamps that heat wax-based products)
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Electrical Emergencies

If an individual suffers a serious electrical shock:

1. Announce a Code Blue, call 9-1-1, and notify a supervisor.
 2. Do not touch the individual if they are in contact with an energized electrical source.
 3. Do not attempt to rescue or move the individual unless you are trained and authorized to do so.
 4. If it is safe to do so, de-energize the electrical source by operating the appropriate disconnect switch, emergency stop, or circuit breaker.
 5. Once the electrical source has been de-energized, provide first aid, CPR, or AED assistance only if you are trained and authorized to do so.
 6. Remain at the scene and assist emergency responders, as needed.
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Related Policy or Procedure

[DBH Standard Practice Manual and Departmental Forms:](#)

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

Reference(s)

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