

# County of Monterey Board Policy Manual

<b>Policy Name</b> Safe Guidelines for the Use of Appliances	<b>Policy Number</b> G-180	<b>Page</b> 1 of 3
<b>Policy Category</b> Government and Administration		

## I. Purpose

To inform Department Heads and County employees of their responsibilities regarding the installation and safe use of appliances to prevent electrical fire hazards in the workplace.

## II. Definitions

1. Facilities – Resource Management Agency Public Works and Facilities Division
2. Designated Department Facility Coordinator – Department Head or his/her designee to serve as liaison with staff, RMA Facilities, and/or lessors regarding facility use and compliance.  
[https://countyofmonterey.sharepoint.com/sites/rma/Docs%20%20Admin/Dept.%20Facility%20Coordinator%20Contact%20List%20\(Rcv%2010-16-17\).pdf](https://countyofmonterey.sharepoint.com/sites/rma/Docs%20%20Admin/Dept.%20Facility%20Coordinator%20Contact%20List%20(Rcv%2010-16-17).pdf)

## III. Background

Pursuant to California Code of Regulations, Title 8, Section 3203, Injury and Illness Prevention Program and OSHA's General Duty Clause, where "each employer shall furnish to each of his employees employment and a place of employment which are free from recognized hazards that are causing or are likely to cause death or serious physical harm to his employees".

## IV. Policy

It is the policy of the County that in the interest of everyone's safety, it is mandatory that all employees comply with these safety guidelines. Failure to comply may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

### **General safety guidelines that must be followed for all appliances:**

- For the purpose of these guidelines, an appliance is as follows: Coffee maker, toaster, toaster oven, microwave oven, fan and refrigerator.
- Employees must have written departmental management approval prior to installing appliances in County occupied buildings.
- Management must ensure the appliance is safe to use in the workplace and confirm with the department designated facility coordinator that the electrical outlet where the

- appliance is intended to be installed/plugged in meets service capacity.
- Do not, under any circumstances, cut or remove the third ground prong from the power cord of any appliance.
  - Secure the electrical cord behind the appliance and do not leave exposed or dangling to prevent tripping hazards.
  - Do not unplug the appliance by pulling the power cord. Always grip the plug firmly and pull straight out from the receptacle.
  - Do not use an extension cord with any appliance.

**Special Safety Precautions need be taken for the following appliances:**

Space Heaters

- Resource Management Agency – Public Works and Facilities (“Facilities”) will investigate complaints of inadequate heat in occupied spaces. In buildings that County occupies but does not own, the landlord will be asked to address the problem.
- Any supplemental heat source used in County occupied space must be approved by Facilities and used only as specified. Such supplemental heating will usually be temporary. All fire codes and safety regulations will be followed.
- Facilities will provide, if needed, any supplemental heating that requires more than 2 amps of current. In some instances, it may be a requirement that the Department that occupies the spaces pay for the supplemental heating equipment; this will be determined on a case- by-case basis.
- Departments that require limited amounts of supplemental warmth for individual employees may purchase the Facilities’ approved Cozy Legs Heater Panel, which has low amperage (less than 2 amps) – and requires low wattage (150 watts) as required by the County’s *Electrical Safety Guidelines*, item 3(f). The panels may be installed by attaching to a desk privacy panel or on an optional stand.
- Space heaters that use more than 2 amps of current are prohibited from use in County facilities leased, rented or owned unless otherwise approved by Facilities.
- Always turn space heaters off when the employee leaves his/her desk and at the end of each work day.

Toasters, Toaster Ovens and Microwave Ovens

- Microwaves, toasters and toaster ovens may not be used in a private office or workstation (cubicle). Such devices may be used only in a properly equipped and department designated facility coordinator approved break area or designated kitchenette space.
- Microwaves, toasters and toaster ovens **must not be left unattended** when heating any food or liquid items.
- Toasters and toaster ovens that have the automatic “shut off” must be turned to the “off” position before leaving the appliance.
- Because of the tendency to easily smoke and/or catch fire, popcorn is not allowed to be microwaved at the workplace.

Coffeemakers

- Coffeemakers that are designed for “household use” must always have an automatic shut-off feature set to shut-off automatically within business hours. Individuals responsible for coffeemakers must ensure that these devices are off at the end of each work day.
- Coffee makers which are equipped with a hot plate to keep coffee warm, may not be used in a private office or workstation (cubicle). Coffee makers may be used only in a properly equipped and department designated facility coordinator approved break area or kitchenette space.

### Fans

- Fans installed within 7 feet of the floor or working level must be guarded.
- The guard must not have openings greater than one-half inch in width.
- The use of concentric rings with spacing between them not exceeding one-half inch are acceptable provided that sufficient radial spokes and firm mountings are used to make the guard rigid enough to prevent it from being pushed into the fan blade during normal use.
- The use of nylon mesh or similar materials with holes not exceeding one-half inch, to modify a substandard guard on an existing fan is acceptable.
- Always turn a fan off when leaving your desk and at the end of each work day.

### Refrigerators

- Mini-refrigerators are discouraged at individual workstations. The County encourages the use of main refrigerators located in break rooms.
- Refrigerators shall only be installed/plugged into electrical outlets designed to safely provide the needed voltage. Check with Facilities to ensure that the electrical outlet where refrigerator is intended to be installed/plugged in meets the required voltage.

### **V. Procedure**

1. See above.

### **VI. Review Date**

1. This Policy will be reviewed for continuance by February 26, 2023.

### **VII. Board Action**

1. Legistar File Number 18-183, February 27, 2018.