

## **UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY'S GUIDELINES REGARDING USE OF PERSONAL EQUIPMENT AND APPLIANCES AT WORKPLACE**

Date Revised: April 12, 2021

### **PURPOSE OF THE GUIDELINES**

Plugged-in equipment accounts for about 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the electricity used in an academic or administration building on campus. While a majority of the equipment is required for the academic mission of the University, some are occupant-owned equipment for personal use. Such equipment not only consume electricity but could also overload the electrical system and pose a fire hazard. The guidelines attempt to reduce campus energy usage and prevent fire hazard from the use of personal equipment and appliances.

### **DEFINING PERSONAL EQUIPMENT AND APPLIANCES**

For the purpose of this document, a personal appliance/device is a corded electrical device brought to the workplace by the employee and not required by the Division/Department. Personal appliances include but are not limited to the following: space heaters, air-conditioners, televisions, aquariums, holiday lights, refrigerators, microwaves, fans, humidifiers and air cleaners, toaster ovens, coffee makers and other small kitchen appliances. The guidelines also address University-owned printers and copiers that are assigned to individuals. Personal laptops, cell phones, appliances, and devices that are necessary to accommodate medical conditions, departmental needs and other special conditions that may warrant an exception are excluded under these guidelines.

### **USE OF PERSONAL EQUIPMENT AND APPLIANCES IN WORKPLACE**

**Kitchen appliances including hot plates, toasters, toaster ovens, microwaves, coffee makers, and refrigerators:** The University attempts to provide adequate break rooms, kitchens, and lounge areas in each building, equipped with approved energy-efficient appliances for the shared use of all building occupants. In campus academic and administration buildings that have designated areas with shared appliances, occupants are discouraged from bringing and using personal appliances. If a building occupant wishes to add an additional shared item to the designated area, please contact Customer Service at 518-442-3480. If you do not have access to a break area/kitchenette with appliances, please contact Customer Service to submit a work order. Use of personal appliances may be allowed, upon approval, in buildings that do not have designated areas that are accessible to occupants.

**Combustion devices:** Use of portable gas stoves, BBQ, gas heaters and all devices with open flame are strictly prohibited inside the buildings.

**Personal printers and copiers:** In many cases, the University has provided personal printers and copiers for individual use. In buildings that provide printers and copiers for shared use in an accessible location, use of such personal printers and copiers is discouraged unless such equipment is required for printing/copying confidential documents.

**Air-conditioners, space heaters and humidifiers:** Use of personal space heaters and air-conditioners is strictly prohibited per the [University's Space Heating and Cooling Policy](#). Humidifiers are also prohibited as they could cause potential air quality and health issues. Desk or table fans less than 8" blade diameter can be used if properly plugged into outlets or surge protectors. Please contact Customer Service if your space is too hot or too cold. By reporting conditions in these spaces to Customer Services, you are assisting Facilities Department investigate and fix the underlying causes. Bringing in a personal device instead of reporting the issue masks the problem and exacerbates the issue for the other occupants in the building. Due to the age of our buildings, some spaces cannot be maintained at adequate temperature. If a fix cannot be implemented, University approved space heaters/air conditioners will be provided.

**Personal entertainment:** Radios, CD players, and cellphones can be used if plugged into outlets, surge protectors or computer USB drive.

**Extension cords:** Extension cords are strictly prohibited for permanent use in the buildings. Occupants must use UL-listed surge protectors with in-built overcurrent protection that are rated for the sum of all loads plugged into it, even if the loads are not planned to be used concurrently. The surge protector must be plugged directly into a permanently installed receptacle and must not be daisy chained.

**Equipment shutdown:** Unplugging and/or turning off the equipment and properly shutting down computers when not in use and especially at the end of each day are easy ways to save energy. Enable proper sleep settings on computers, monitors and printers and disable screen savers to reduce IT equipment usage. A UL-listed surge protected power strip can be used to conveniently turn off monitors, speakers, task lighting, chargers and desktop printers at a central point and eliminate vampire or stand-by loads. The power strip must have overcurrent protection, must be rated for the sum off all loads plugged into it and must be plugged directly into the outlet. Daisy chaining surge protectors is strictly prohibited.

### **RESPONSIBILITY FOR ADHERENCE TO GUIDELINES**

All University employees can help implement the guidelines. Facilities Management staff will report unauthorized equipment and appliances discovered in the course of their work to the Energy Office. The Energy Office will send a request to the equipment owner to remove the equipment/appliance or submit a request for use of the equipment with justification. The Facilities personnel will remove any devices that present a potential hazard to the facility or its occupant.

### **QUESTIONS/COMPLAINTS**

As building occupants, you can help implement the guidelines and make it a successful University-wide conservation and safety effort. If you have an issue with access to shared devices or thermal environment in your workspace, please contact Customer Service at 518-442-3480 to submit a work order. If you have concerns or questions regarding the guidelines, please address them to the University Energy Officer at 518-442-3183.