



Necessary Cold Weather Life-Safety Practices

Here at CWU, it is vital to stay compliant with basic life-safety practices as faculty, staff, and even as students. The below noted items are potential hazards that can be avoided by simple actions.

In order to ensure our building occupants' safety, it is crucial to maintain compliance in all campus buildings including residence halls, academic buildings, and all other auxiliary buildings.

Recurring Building Inspections:

Our county's Kittitas Valley Fire and Rescue (KVFR) perform walk-through inspections of our campus' buildings on a regular basis. During these inspections, they identify concerning practices that are included in their reports.

Identified Concerning Practices:

Plugging Heating Elements into Extra Electrical Connections: Many people do not realize that it is very dangerous to plug heating elements such as space heaters or toaster ovens into power strips, surge protectors, or extension cords. Doing so generates extra resistance and increased risks of overloading circuits that feed them.

Risk/Hazard: By plugging high-wattage, high-draw equipment into extra electrical connections, heat buildup occurs, creating increased risks for internal component failures and fires.

To be Compliant: Ensure heating elements are plugged directly into wall receptacle outlets. Place your space heater on a level, flat surface. Keep your heating element three feet away from walls/desks/combustible material. Never use a heating element that appears damaged.

Storage of Equipment and Materials: Specific spaces need to remain clear when storing equipment and materials indoors. When equipment is stored inside of buildings and obstructing exits, this directly effects occupants' safety. There are many hallways, custodial closets and storage spaces throughout campus that contain electrical equipment, panels, or fire sprinkler equipment. Ensure all fire sprinkler heads are kept clear.

Risk/Hazard: In the event of a fire, building occupants will not be able to exit the building as quickly as possible with obstructions in the way. The Fire Department needs to have quick and clear access into buildings as well as electrical panels and sprinkler equipment. Delays to equipment can increase the spread of fire and increases the amount of property loss in our buildings. Storing items too close to sprinklers will impact their ability to reduce the spread of fire.

To Be Compliant: Most of these locations are marked saying not to store anything in front of them and their notices need to not be disregarded, as a fire can happen at any time. When storing/stacking materials in a room containing fire sprinkler heads, leave adequate space (18 inches minimum) for the sprinklers to operate and extinguish fires properly, and do not hang any items from them. Egress pathways must always be kept clear.

Facilities Management Department

400 East University Way | Ellensburg, WA 98926 | Office: 509-963-3304
Fire Protection Shop – Naneum Building | Email: Shelan.Kuckuck@cwu.edu | Cell: 509-859-1778

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