

## Fire Prevention in Academic Offices

By Wayne G. Springer

**F**ire Prevention pays the greatest dividends...the preservation of life and property. Good housekeeping is more than just a adage, it directly reflects the fire incident threat level. For a fire to occur, two components need to be present, fuel and an ignition source. In too many academic office environments, there is an over abundance of combustible materials: books, periodicals, newspapers, files, student papers and cardboard boxes crammed into a very small space. Adding to the fuel load there will be numerous sources of ignition: lamps, power strips, computers, printers, charging devices, microwaves, coffee makers, mini-refrigerators, fans and space heaters. Allowing the combustible materials to be piled on top of electrical cords, and power strips, or to be placed too close to space heaters, presents an opportunity for a fire to occur.

The power strips with overload protection must be plugged

directly into a wall receptacle. An extension cord must never be used. Extension cords are for temporary use only. If you are using an extension cord as a permanent solution, please contact your campus' Facilities Services office to request an additional wall receptacle. When the electrical devices and appliances are plugged into the power strip and the power strip is then plugged into an extension cord, resistance heating will occur in the electrical cord and the power strip and eventually will result in a fire.



Portable space heaters are prohibited in university buildings. Should your space require more heat you must first contact your campus' Facilities Services office and request them to attempt to provide you with more heat from the buildings HVAC system. If the system is not able to provide the required comfort level you desire, Facilities Services will provide you with an authorized portable space heater. Space heaters must be kept at least three (3) feet from any combustibles.

Open flames such as candles and incense are strictly prohibited inside university buildings. By limiting the amount and location of the combustible material in your office space, you will greatly enhance your fire safe environment. Common sense and fire safety awareness will provide you with the ability to protect your life and your valuable and irreplaceable documents.

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## Laboratory Fire Safety

By Shaun W. Savage

**W**ith New Years well behind us, it is an ideal time to review lab fire safety. Not only is this important for the safety and well being of occupants, it is critical that we prepare for routine regulatory inspections performed by local fire departments. The most aggressive inspection is the annual lab inspections performed by the Boston Fire Department (BFD). Here a representative from BFD will visit each lab to review several fire related issues. Successful participation in these inspections is necessary for registering labs, which is an annual requirement in the City of Boston. Failing to participate

and perform well during these inspections could result in a lab being temporarily closed. Working together, you and the TEHS staff can avoid the following fire hazards:

1. Safety signs on lab doors are not legible and/or accurate.
2. Lab doors that exit into the hallway are not closed.
3. Hallways, egress paths and egress doors are not free of trash, equipment, cylinders or bicycles.

4. Excessive combustible storage such as boxes and papers are not disposed.
5. Storage of supplies are not stored at least 18 inches from ceiling and sprinkler heads.
6. Emergency showers and eye wash stations are not free of obstructions.
7. Fire extinguishers and fire alarm activation devices are not free of obstructions.

8. Fire extinguishers are not mounted on the walls, certified within the last year and do not have an identifying sign.
9. Flammable stock chemicals are not stored in approved flammable storage cabinets.
10. Empty chemical containers kept for the future storage of chemicals do not have the original labels defaced.

As always, if clarification or assistance is needed, please do not hesitate to contact TEHS.