

Electrical Equipment and Appliances in the Workplace Policy

Description:

This policy has been established to reduce the risk of harm to people and property from electrical equipment and appliances in the workplace. All electrical equipment and appliances must meet or exceed Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standards for use in a commercial office building.

Reason for Policy:

The Occupational Safety and Health Act requires employers to comply with safety and health standards established by the U.S. Department of Labor Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). OSHA standards require that electrical equipment and appliances in the workplace are certified by Nationally Recognized Testing Laboratories (NRTL) to reduce the risk of fires caused by non-compliant electrical equipment and appliances brought into the workplace.

Applicability:

DHS-wide Central Office Employees at DHS Locations excluding telework locations. This policy does not apply to MNIT-issued computer equipment in the workplace, e.g., laptops and docking stations.

Failure to Comply:

Failure to comply with this policy and its procedures may result in disciplinary actions or termination.

Policy:

- I. Electrical equipment and appliances in the workplace are required to be UL Listed and/or certified by a Nationally Recognized Testing Laboratory (NRTL).
 - UL Listed and/or NRTL certification ensures that electrical equipment and appliances meet or exceed the requirements of both construction and general industry OSHA electrical standards in a commercial office building.
- II. Electrical equipment and appliances in the workplace must be stored and operated in a manner that meets or exceeds OSHA standards.
 - Equipment that depends on the natural circulation of air and convection principles for cooling of exposed surfaces must be stored or operated in a manner that does not impede cooling and reduces risk of fire.

- Equipment must be free of damaged parts that may adversely affect safe operation or mechanical strength of the equipment.

III. All electrical equipment and appliances in the workplace fall under the purview of the Workplace Enterprise Services Team– Facilities. (WEST-Facilities)

- For reduction of risk to staff and the building, WEST – Facilities reserves the right to remove electrical equipment and appliances that violate this policy.

IV. Employee Personal Electrical Equipment and Appliances

- Employees can store and use personal desktop fans and personal desktop full spectrum lights at their desk. Personal fans and lights must be turned off when the employee is not at their desk.
- Electrical equipment and appliances approved as part of a reasonable accommodation request under the Americans with Disabilities Act are permitted in the workplace.
 - Equipment and appliances approved as a reasonable accommodation must still meet the OSHA requirements of this policy workplace risk.
 - See the [DHS Reasonable Accommodation Policy](#) for more information.

1. Employees cannot store or use prohibited equipment in the workplace. Prohibited electrical equipment and appliances include but are not limited to:

- Any electrical equipment and appliance that does not meet OSHA standards for the workplace
- Broilers
- Coffee makers with an external heating element and/or hot/warming plate
- Coffee warmers
- Dehumidifiers/humidifiers
- Diffusers
- Electric frying pans
- Electric grills
- Electric kettles
- Hot plates
- Open flame/Bunsen burner devices
- Personal heaters

- Personal refrigerators
- Personal water dispensers
- Roasters
- Sandwich presses
- Toasters and toaster ovens
- Waffle irons
- Water bubblers
- Water heating devices
- Water tanks
- Wax warmers

V. Service Center Electrical Equipment and Appliances

- Coffee makers without a hot plate or warming plate are allowed.
 - All electric coffee makers are required to be stored and operated in the shared kitchenette or service center on a non-flammable countertop surface (Formica or metal).
 - One cup or Kuerig-type coffee makers are allowed if they do not have a hot plate or warming plate.
 - All Kuerig-type coffee makers must be stored and operated in the shared kitchenette or service center.
 - Employees are encouraged to use compostable or reusable K-Cups for Kuerig-type coffee makers.
 - All coffee makers are required to be kept in good working order, without combustible elements, clean, and free of debris. Employees are responsible to clean up after themselves for coffee spills or grounds.
 - In order to avoid serious plumbing issues in the building, staff must never place coffee grounds in the sink.
 - Coffee maker use that affects the cleanliness of the workplace or results in repeated sink clogs will be removed.
- Crockpots/slow cookers without damage or electrical defects may be used in the designated service centers. All crockpots/slow cookers must be unplugged and removed from the work area

by 4:30 p.m. or when the employee responsible for the device leaves for the day, whichever occurs first.

- West-Facilities install and manage approved microwave ovens in kitchenette, service center, and lactation rooms. (may be used in community, service and/or kitchen areas).
- West- Facilities install and manage approved refrigerators in kitchenette, service center, and lactation rooms.
- West- Facilities install and manage approved filtered hot and cold-water dispensers in kitchenette rooms and service centers.
- Surge protectors and power strips without damage or electrical defects may be used in the workplace.
 - Staff request replacement of surge protectors from TSL every three to five years.
 - Staff cannot connect multiple surge protectors together creating a chain.
- By code, extension cords are to be used only on a temporary basis. They must be of commercial grade, grounded, and of a gauge size to provide adequate protection from overheating. Extension cords cannot be left on the floor across walkways or in violation of building code.

Procedure(s):

I. Employee Responsibilities

- Employees are required to report broken electrical equipment or appliances in the workplace through the [DHS Facilities Work Order Request form](#). A member of the WEST-Facilities team will follow up on the Work Order and address the reported issue.

II. WEST-Facilities, WEST-Security, and Information Desk/Mail Room staff responsibilities:

- Maintain a regular monthly schedule of checking conference rooms, service centers, and special use spaces for electrical equipment and appliances that are not OSHA standard-compliant and/or violate this policy.
- Maintain a regular monthly schedule of checking common areas and workspace for OSHA and building code violations and reporting violations as required through the Work Order. Once reported, WEST-Facilities and/or Security staff are responsible for following up on the violation and ensuring it is resolved.
- WEST-Facilities staff will remove electrical equipment or appliances from the workplace that violate this policy. Notice of the removal will be provided to the employee and/or the work area Chief Administrative Officer with a pickup option if the employee wishes to take the device home.

III. Noncompliance Follow up:

- When employees or associates bring electrical equipment or appliances into the workplace that are not OSHA standard-compliant and/or violate this policy, they will be given notice by WEST-Facilities that these items must be taken home or placed with recyclable items for removal. High risk items will be removed from the workplace by WEST-Facilities.

- If employees or associates continue to bring electrical equipment and appliances that are not OSHA standard-compliant and/or violate this policy after being provided notice, the employee will be referred to Human Resources with notice to the employee's immediate supervisor.
- Depending on the level of risk to people and property posed by the equipment or appliance, WEST-Facilities may escalate as appropriate with agency leadership and Department of Administration.

Form(s) that Apply:

[DHS Facilities Work Order Request](#) to report issues with electrical equipment and appliances.

Related Policies and Reference(s):

[U.S. Department of Labor Occupational Safety and Health Administration \(OSHA\), Certified Equipment](#)

[U.S. Department of Labor Occupational Safety and Health Administration \(OSHA\), Standard Industrial Classification \(SIC\) Manual, Major Group 36: Electronic And Other Electrical Equipment And Components, Except Computer Equipment](#)

[U.S. Department of Labor Occupational Safety and Health Administration \(OSHA\), Workplace use of electrical equipment designated as Household Use Only and recordkeeping requirements](#)

[U.S. Fire Administration, Workplace Fire Safety](#)

[Building Access and Control Policy](#)

[Visitor Policy](#)

Training:

Available upon request from WEST-Facilities, see policy contact below.

Legal Authority:

[Occupational Safety and Health Act, 29 U.S.C. §§ 651–678](#)

Standards:

[U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Safety and Health Administration Safety and Health Information Bulletin, Certification of Workplace Products by Nationally Recognized Testing Laboratories](#)

[U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Safety and Health Standards: 1910.303\(a\), 1910.303\(b\)\(2\), 1910.7, 1910.303\(b\), 1910.304\(f\)\(5\)\(v\)\(C\)\(5\)](#)

[U.S. Department of Labor Occupational Safety and Health Administration \(OSHA\), Standard Industrial Classification \(SIC\) Manual, Major Group 35: Industrial And Commercial Machinery And Computer Equipment](#)

[U.S. Department of Labor Occupational Safety and Health Administration \(OSHA\), Standard Industrial Classification \(SIC\) Manual, Major Group 36: Electronic And Other Electrical Equipment And Components, Except Computer Equipment](#)

Definition(s):

Associate: A state employee from a different agency who works directly with a division within the Department of Human Services.

Chief Administrative Officer (CAO): State employee assigned by their Assistant Commissioner to coordinate activities throughout the organization and maintain administrative continuity throughout the various work units.

DHS Central Office Locations: State-owned or leased office buildings that support the work of DHS as an executive branch agency responsible for administration of programs and services for the people of Minnesota.

- Lafayette Building, 444 Lafayette Road North, St. Paul, MN 55155
- Elmer L. Andersen Human Services Building, 540 Cedar Street, St. Paul, MN 55101
- Distribution Center 1/Issuance Operations Center (DC1/IOC), 355 E. Eighth Street, St. Paul, MN 55101
- Brainerd Building 20, 11630 State Avenue, Building #20 MN-309, Brainerd, MN 56401

The MNIT EDC1 location is leased separately by MNIT from the Department of Administration and is not a part of DHS Central Office workspace.

Electrical Equipment and Appliances: Machines that carry out a process or function using electricity (movement of charge-carrying electrons through a metal wire).

Household Equipment: Electrical equipment classified as “Household Use” or “Household Use Only” by a Nationally Recognized Testing Laboratory (NRTL) and/or listed in Industry Group 363: Household Appliances in “[U.S. Department of Labor Occupational Safety and Health Administration \(OSHA\), Standard Industrial Classification \(SIC\) Manual, Major Group 36: Electronic And Other Electrical Equipment And Components, Except Computer Equipment.](#)” These machines typically do not meet or exceed OSHA standard requirements for electrical equipment in the workplace.

Industrial and Commercial Equipment: Electrical equipment classified as meeting or exceeding OSHA standard requirements for electrical equipment in the workplace by a Nationally Recognized Testing Laboratory (NRTL) and/or listed in “[U.S. Department of Labor Occupational Safety and Health Administration \(OSHA\), Standard Industrial Classification \(SIC\) Manual, Major Group 35: Industrial And Commercial Machinery And Computer Equipment.](#)”

Nationally Recognized Testing Laboratory (NRTL): Third-party (i.e., independent) organizations recognized by OSHA as having the technical capability to perform safety testing and certification of particular types of products. NRTLs provide testing and certification services to the manufacturers of a wide range of products used in the workplace.

Service Center: Shared spaces which exist to support agency shared technology and storage needs. They also provide shared vending and kitchenette equipment such as refrigerators, microwaves, water, and coffee service, as well as seating space for eating, small informal meetings and employee celebrations.

U.S. Department of Labor Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA): OSHA is part of the [United States Department of Labor](#). The administrator for OSHA is the Assistant Secretary of Labor for Occupational Safety and Health. OSHA's administrator answers to the Secretary of Labor, who is a member of the cabinet of the President of the United States. See [OSHA At-A-Glance](#) for more information.

UL Listed: UL, formerly known as Underwriters Laboratories, is a global independent safety science company, <https://www.ul.com>

Policy Contact(s):

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This policy and its procedures remain in effect until rescinded or updated.