

State of Vermont
Agency of Administration
Department of Buildings & General Services

Policy 0042

Title: Buildings and General Services (BGS) – State Buildings Appliance Policy

Date of Issue:

PURPOSE

In accordance with 3 V.S.A. § 2283a, this policy establishes guidelines for the safe and proper operation of appliances in state buildings.

DEFINITIONS

- A. Appliance:** Any item that requires an electrical outlet (plug) connection or a power source for operation, including permanent fixtures and temporary devices, other than electronic devices such as personal computers (PC's), monitors, phones, tablets, printers, and related technology items that have been provided to the employee by the State of Vermont and employee owned electronic devices such as cell phones, tablets and laptops.
- B. State Buildings:** All state-owned or leased buildings, structures, and appurtenances under the jurisdiction of the Commissioner of Buildings and General Services as limited by the exceptions to jurisdiction in 29 V.S.A. § 152(9) and 29 V.S.A. Chapter 5A.
- C. Employee-Furnished Appliances:** Devices brought into the space by employees, including but not limited to, fans, heaters, coffee pots, microwaves, radios, lamps, clocks, refrigerators, etc.
- D. State-Furnished Appliances:** Include but are not limited to, shared appliances (such as refrigerators, microwaves, and coffee services) located in spaces that are designed as break areas, and individual appliances, including but not limited to, space heaters, task lighting, and special accommodation appliances that are provided by the State and approved by BGS.
- E. Appointing Authority:** The officer, board, or person authorized by statute, or lawfully-delegated authority to appoint and dismiss employees of the State of Vermont.

POLICY

The BGS Commissioner and/or designees may require evaluation of the use of employee furnished appliances, including but not limited to, space heaters, coffee makers, mini-refrigerators, microwave ovens, toasters, etc. Not all appliances are acceptable for use in state buildings.

- BGS is responsible for providing a safe physical environment for all employees and customers and may require the review and approval of any and all appliances in State Buildings.

- BGS may require the immediate removal of unauthorized appliances, subject to this policy.
- Employees must acquire both BGS' and their Agency's or Department's authorization in advance of installing any appliance they bring into the workplace. Unauthorized appliances shall be immediately unplugged by the employee at the request of a BGS employee under the direction of the Commissioner of BGS and later removed from the facility, by the employee.

Kitchen Type Appliances:

BGS may establish how, when, and where breakrooms (common areas) and kitchenettes should be designed to best serve state government employees. All kitchen type or other appliances that are used for storage and preparation of food and drink are confined to areas as designated by BGS in coordination with the appointing authority. Personal appliances such as personal water heaters and coffee makers of any type are not allowed in work stations or areas outside the designated areas. No cooking appliances, including but not limited to, toasters, toasters ovens and hot plates, shall be provided or allowed in a building, unless appropriate fire-protection systems and ventilation systems are present and meet code requirements. This is not intended to prohibit the use of devices for rewarming food that was previously prepared off-site such as crockpots and microwaves. State employees are not permitted to establish their own kitchenette or breakroom.

Every building is different, and many state office buildings are unique spaces that may require variances from these guidelines and standards. Exceptions may be made by the BGS Commissioner or designee, on a case by case basis, in writing to the appointing authority based upon a request by the appointing authority.

Personal Space Heaters:

No personal space heaters shall be allowed in buildings without prior written approval from BGS. Personal space heater requests will not be accommodated if the space is consistently above the defined temperature in the collective bargaining agreement. Personal space heaters will not be approved until all other adjustments to the physical work environment have been attempted by BGS. If a space heater is approved for use, the upper temperature setting shall be 72°F, unless otherwise authorized. Approved heaters must be turned off at the end of the day. If a heater is left on it will be considered grounds to revoke approval.

- The heater must have an auto shut-off tip-over switch.
- The heater must carry the Underwriter's Laboratory (UL) label, the ETL label from Intertek, or certification from CSA International.
- The heater must be thermostatically controlled.
- The heater must be properly sized for the space. Most heaters come with a general sizing table.
- The heater must be plugged directly into a BGS approved wall outlet and mounted on a level surface away from foot traffic.

Humidifiers:

No humidifiers will be allowed in buildings without prior written approval from BGS. BGS discourages the use of humidifiers in buildings due to environmental safety considerations and exceptions will be made for appropriately documented medical reasons only. If a humidifier is approved for use, it must be cleaned and maintained by the employee according to the manufacturer's recommendations.

Dehumidifiers:

Only BGS will install dehumidifiers in Buildings.

Air Purifiers:

No air purifiers will be allowed in buildings without prior written approval from BGS. If an air purifier is allowed it must utilize high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filters and must be cleaned and maintained by the employee according to the manufacturer's recommendations. No ozone generating devices will be allowed.

PERSONAL APPLIANCE REQUEST PROCEDURE

1. Any State employee that wishes to bring an employee furnished appliance into the workplace shall complete an appliance in the workplace form at <https://bgs.vermont.gov/>.
2. The request will be automatically sent to BGS for review and a recommendation will be made to the BGS Commissioner's Office.
3. If the BGS Commissioner's Office authorizes the use of the appliance, the employee may use the appliance and will receive confirmation that their appliance has been approved for use, contingent upon adhering to this policy. BGS may re-evaluate the approval of use of an appliance at any time.
4. If the request is denied, the employee shall:
 - a. Receive notice with reason for the denial.
 - b. If the appliance is already in use the employee shall remove the appliance from State property.

Department Approval:

Chh Ch, Commissioner 1-28-20

Agency Approval Required:

Sannet 1-29-2020