

Augusta University

Policy Library

Electrical Safety Policy

Policy Manager: Environmental Health and Safety Division

POLICY STATEMENT

Augusta University has implemented an electrical safety program to promote institutional safety in compliance with state and federal regulations, and to ensure the safety of faculty, staff, patients, visitors, and students when using electrically energized equipment or circuits.

All Augusta University faculty, staff, students, and patients and visitors shall comply with institutional standards when planning, purchasing, installing, and using electrical equipment and appliances.

AFFECTED STAKEHOLDERS

Indicate all entities and persons within the Enterprise that are affected by this policy:

- Alumni Faculty Graduate Students Health Professional Students
 Staff Undergraduate Students Vendors/Contractors Visitors
 Other:

DEFINITIONS

These definitions apply to the terms as they are used in this policy:

Adaptor Plug: A plug that is used to convert a three-prong grounded plug into a two-prong ungrounded plug.

Combustible: Any material that will ignite and burn.

Extension Cord: A cord that is used on a temporary or emergency basis of less than eight hours. They must be UL-listed.

Flammable: A combustible that is capable of easily being ignited and rapidly consumed by fire, including liquids having a flashpoint below 100 degrees Fahrenheit.

Flammable Vapor: Any substance that exists in the gaseous state at normal atmospheric temperature and pressure and that is capable of being ignited and burned when mixed with the proper proportions of air, oxygen, or other oxidizer.

GFCI Outlet: A Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter outlet is designed to shut off under specific conditions.

Hotplate: An appliance with stove-type burners for cooking.

Multi-Plug Power Strip: A unit that has multiple three-prong outlets, with or without a cord, which has a circuit breaker feature.

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Outlet Extender: A device, which does not have a circuit breaker feature, that when plugged into one or two outlets provides any number of additional outlets.

Project Request Form: This form is completed for maintenance that requires a funding source coordinated by the Augusta University Facilities Operations Department.

Space Heater: A portable appliance that is used for heating.

Surge Protector: A unit that has multiple three-prong outlets, with or without a cord, that prevents over-powering of equipment in the event of a surge in the power line to the equipment. The unit should clearly state, "UL Listed Transient Voltage Suppressor".

UL-Listed: Items that have been tested and listed by the Underwriters Laboratories, INC.

ETL-Listed: Items that have been tested and listed by Intertek.

Work Orders: This process (e-mail, phone call) is completed for maintenance that does not require a funding source coordinated by the Facilities Operations Department.

PROCESS & PROCEDURES

Augusta University promotes safe work practices to prevent electric shock or other injuries resulting from either direct or indirect electrical contacts when work is performed near or on equipment or circuits which are or may be energized. The University will take measures to protect persons, buildings, and property from hazards arising from the use of electricity. For this purpose, the University adopts the codes and standards promulgated by the State of Georgia, which contains basic minimum provisions necessary for safety.

Guidelines:

- No electrical installation, modifications, repair, or maintenance shall be performed by department personnel other than Augusta University Facilities Operations personnel or duly authorized contractors. This does not apply to UL-Listed or ETL-Listed electrical devices or appliance that can be plugged into a standard wall outlet.
- Extension cords may be used only on a temporary or emergency basis. For consultant or repetitive needs, permanent wiring shall be requested. Extension cords are limited to a maximum length of 25 feet, shall be UL-Listed or ETL-Listed, minimum 16-gauge wire to carry 13 amps, have a 3-prong plug, and shall be suited to the application.
- When a temporary extension cord is used, including for audio visual equipment, it must be disconnected when not in use and stored properly. It must be used in such a manner as to not cause tripping hazard. Consult Environmental Health and Safety Division's Fire Safety Office if there is any question as to whether or not the use of an extension cord is acceptable.

Multi-Plug Power Strips and Surge Protectors: The use of UL-Listed or ETL-Listed multi-plug power strips and surge protectors is allowed but restricted as follows:

- Use of the equipment in conjunction with an outlet extender, a temporary extension cord, another multi-plug power strip, or another surge protector is prohibited.
- The unit shall be maintained a minimum of 8 inches from the floor surface.
- The unit shall be maintained a minimum of 36 inches from a sink or basin.
- Surge protectors shall be maintained securely and permanently affixed. This may require mounting to equipment or furniture. Many surge protectors have mounting brackets for screws that are designed for this purpose. Heavy double-sided foam tape, minimum 1/8 inch by 1 inch, may be used to mount surge protectors in some situations. Avoid mounting surge protectors to the walls of an area when possible. (Note: A Project Request Form is required for installation by Facilities Operations.)

Space Heaters: The use of UL-Listed or ETL-Listed space heaters is allowed in most campus buildings, unless restricted by this policy. An approved space heater meets the following requirements:

- Only electrical space heaters are allowed.
- The unit shall be standard voltage (120V) and cannot be rated for more than 1500 watts.
- The unit shall be thermostatically controlled to shut off when a certain temperature is reached.
- The unit shall have a “tip-over” automatic shut off or an over-heat automatic shut off feature.

The use of space heaters is restricted as follows:

- May not be used in patient care areas.
- May not be used in student housing buildings.
- May not be used in conjunction with an extension cord, an outlet extender, or a surge protector.
- The unit must be located in plain sight and clearly visible.
- The unit must be operated 36 inches away from combustible material such as paper, furniture, clothing curtains, trash cans, or storage. Nothing should ever be placed on top or beside space heater, and the heater must remain on the floor.
- The unit must be positioned at least 6 feet away from a sink or basin.
- The unit must not be used in an area where flammable materials or flammable vapors may be found or in a room used to store flammable materials (e.g., housekeeping closets, lab, lab chemical storage areas, etc.).
- Existing heaters that are non-compliant shall be removed from campus use.
- Refer to these requirements when purchasing any space heater.

Other electrical equipment: The following guidelines apply to any electrical equipment not listed above:

- Any equipment that has a damaged electrical cord or is deemed electrically unsafe shall be removed from service until repaired or replaced.
- The use of outlet extenders, such as 1 outlet-makes-3 outlets or 2 outlets-makes-6 outlets, are not permitted under any circumstances.

- Plug-in air fresheners with an outlet feature for another electrical device are not permitted.
- The use of an adapter that allows a 3-wire grounded plug to be used as a 2-wire plug is not permitted.
- Electrical outlets within 6 feet of a sink or basin are required to have a Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter (GFCI). Existing outlets are exempt until replaced due to malfunction or renovation.
- The use of hotplates is prohibited in student housing buildings.

REFERENCES & SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

- Official Code of Georgia Annotated – Title 25
<https://law.justia.com/codes/georgia/2020/title-25/>
- Rules and Regulations of the Fire Safety Commissioner, 120-3
<https://rules.sos.ga.gov/GAC/120-3>
- Adopted and amended codes from the National Fire Protection Association and the International Code Council.
<https://www.nfpa.org/>
<https://www.iccsafe.org/>

RELATED POLICIES

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APPROVED BY:

Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost, Augusta University

Date: 12/1/2022

President, Augusta University

Date: 12/1/2022