



California State University, Chico
Department of Environmental Health & Safety

Fire Safety & Fire Code Compliance

This document is intended to provide guidelines for CSU, Chico faculty and staff that promote life and fire safety on campus. Through awareness and education, the campus community can significantly reduce the potential of fire and also be in compliance with applicable life and fire safety regulations.

Electrical Fire Hazards

The following is prohibited by State Law and are considered fire hazards:

- Permanent use of extension cords to provide power to equipment or appliances; including computers.
- Multi-plug taps of any type, 3 to 2 grounding adapters, 4-way or 6-way wall receptacle adapters, etc.
- Interconnecting (daisy chaining) multi-outlet strips together or connecting extension cords into multi-outlet power strips.

If your workspace does not contain an adequate number of electrical receptacles, *circuit-protected multi outlet strips* (power strips) may be used. The power strip must have overcurrent protection and/or have a circuit reset feature or built in circuit breaker. Note: Surge protection does *not* satisfy this requirement as these devices do not protect from circuit overload.

The multi-outlet strip must lay flat on a surface or be mounted to the side of a desk – it cannot be suspended by its cord or by the cords plugged into it. (Due to possible lead and asbestos, wall mounting must be performed by Facilities Managements Services (FMS), via an online service request.

Other Fire Hazards

Other non-permitted items which constitute fire hazards include:

- Candles and incense.
- Open flames (other than in a controlled laboratory setting).
- Halogen light bulbs.
- Cooking devices such as hot-plates, toaster ovens, insta-pots, and air-fryers unless located in an approved kitchen.
- Non-approved portable electric space heaters. Portable heaters must have an auto shutoff for tip over and must be plugged directly into an outlet. No use of extension cords or power strips is permitted. (Please contact FMS if you have questions regarding heater use).

Fire Loading: Storage and Housekeeping

Good housekeeping and fire safety awareness are important components of fire prevention.

Fire loading is the term used to describe the amount of combustibles expected to be present in a given space under ordinary circumstances. In an office space, large or numerous stacks of papers, books, boxes, accumulated paper waste, and decorative materials including fabrics, curtains, and upholstered furniture can contribute to or create a high fire load. A high fire load will cause a small fire to grow larger and spread to other areas very rapidly.

There are Fire Code requirements pertaining to storage. Storage is required to be orderly, not in excess (fire loading) and stored items cannot block doorways or other exit access points. The Fire Code requires a clear exit path of at least 24" in width in *storage areas*. Other areas require a minimum of 32" in width. In classrooms and offices a good rule to follow is that the exit access should be no less than the width of exit.

Storage must also not be too close to the ceiling: 18" of clearance from combustibles to the sprinkler head deflector must be provided within buildings with fire sprinklers. 24" of clearance to the ceiling must be provided in buildings without fire sprinklers. This regulation is intended to delay or avoid the spread of smoke and fire into ceiling spaces and to allow water from fire suppression efforts to reach all areas within the room or space.

Please contact the Department of Environmental Health and Safety at 898-5126 if you have any questions regarding fire safety and code compliance.