

## Prevent Office Fires

Fire hazards increase during the winter, and the resulting fire, smoke and water damage can be catastrophic. The Fire Protection Association offers these tips to prevent office fires:

- Don't run power cords and extension cords under a carpet, rug, or furniture. Keep cords away from high-traffic areas to prevent a tripping hazard. Don't use extension cords with space heaters.
- Space heaters use a lot of electricity. To avoid a circuit overload, plug it into a circuit that is not already burdened by other appliances and fixtures.
- Never stack papers or books on a space heater or use it to dry clothing, cook food, thaw pipes directly, or warm bedding.
- Do not use extension cords or surge protectors that are damaged or have been altered. Use only Underwriters Laboratories (UL) approved, three-wire extension cords for appliances with three-prong plugs.
- Make sure kitchen areas are equipped with a fire extinguisher and train all your employees to use it. A Class ABC extinguisher will put out most fires.
- Back up computer information and other vital business records monthly. Store this information in a secured location off-site where you can easily retrieve these records in the event of a fire or other disaster.

---

If you have a safety or risk management question or a suggestion for a topic, please contact Markel's Risk Management Department at [safety1st@markelcorp.com](mailto:safety1st@markelcorp.com).