

# Risk Management Guideline

## Personal Items, Appliances & Furniture

### Background:

When it comes to the use of personal appliances, the most pressing exposures posed include fire to the building and site, the increased electrical costs and additional load on the electrical system. As a result, any personal electrical appliance brought onto a school site and utilized, increases the standard risks for our schools. In addition that risk is doubled and tripled when staff members are allowed to use extension chords to power appliances, particularly in the classroom. Further, most staff are not aware that personal items brought to school even though they may be used in the classroom, are not covered under our MOC should a loss occur. Only district authorized personal items can be added on to the policy.

Appliances that are associated with food contribute to the continual battle to control rodents and insects. In addition, the incidence of vandalism to classrooms storing candy bars, sodas, etc has risen dramatically as funds for extra-curricular programs have dwindled.

Furniture such as chairs and couches rarely meet the fire code regulations, thus putting the district at greater liability when fires or injuries occur. All upholstered furniture added to facilities after October 1, 2001 must be certified as resistant to fire ignition by the UFAC or meet the California Technical Bulletin flammability requirements of California Technical Bulletins. In addition, fabric curtains must be treated with flame retarding chemicals.

### Recommendation:

Personal items; computers, furniture such as chairs and couches, tools and appliances such as coffee pots, microwaves and space heaters: The school district is encouraged to set policy prohibiting whenever possible.

### Guidelines:

- 1) If the school district allows personal items, appliances or furniture items, they should undergo an approval process on a case-by-case basis. For example, if certain tools are needed to perform jobs and the district benefits from the use of the tools, they need to be included and authorized in the inventory.
- 2) If the school district allows personal electrical items, measures should be taken to ensure that the appliance is not powered using extension cords or piggy-backed power supplies.
- 3) If the school district allows personal furniture items, measures should be taken to ensure that the furniture is tagged with verification that they meet all requirements. If the proper verification tag is not available, the furniture should be removed from the site.
- 4) If the school district allows personal fabric curtains, measures should be taken to ensure that they have been treated with flame retarding chemicals.