February 16, 2015

Q: When it is extremely cold outside, can a LTC facility utilize space heaters in hallways to assist with heat as long as they are under sight/monitored by staff?

A: Section 20.7.8 of the NFPA Life Safety Code (which LTC facilities are required to follow) states that “Portable space-heating devices shall be prohibited.” There is one exception noted under 20.7.8, which allows “Portable space-heating devices shall be permitted to be used in non-sleeping staff and employee areas where the heating elements of such devices do not exceed 212 degrees F (100 degrees C).” Section 300.670h) – Disaster Preparedness – (under the Illinois Skilled Nursing and Intermediate Care Licensure Code) states that “A written plan shall be developed for temporarily relocating the residents for any disaster requiring relocation and at any time that the temperature in residents' bedrooms falls below 55°F for 12 hours or more.”