Office of Fire Prevention and Control

Inspection & Investigation Branch

Campus Fire Safety Bulletin

Prevention Through Education

Check Your Lamps – Don't Exceed The Maximum Wattage

It only takes one improperly installed lamp in your light fixture to cause a fire. All too often we disregard the manufacturer's instructions and install lamps in our fixtures that exceed the maximum rated wattage. While this practice might be convenient, it is most certainly a recipe for disaster. Our fire and life safety inspections have indicated this is occurring quite frequently on campuses across the state in student residence halls and business offices.

When the maximum wattage is exceeded the excessive heat generated can easily melt the shade or degrade the wiring. If this condition goes undetected a fire can result.

When replacing a lamp in your fixture it is important to locate the label or consult the instruction manual to prevent this from occurring. CFLs have become a popular choice for replacing the incandescent lamp but do have some limitations. Please check the rating of the CFL to be sure it is compatible with your appliance.

Look for the label and follow the instructions.

§605.7 Appliances. Electrical appliances and fixtures shall be tested and listed in published reports of inspected electrical equipment by an approved agency and installed and maintained in accordance with all instructions included as part of such listing.

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