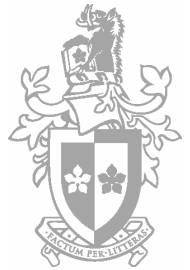


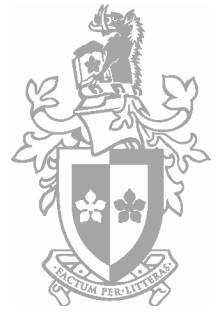
# Health & Safety Information Sheet

## Microwave ovens – Use & Maintenance



Microwave ovens are located throughout Swinburne University campuses in both staff & students dining areas and kitchens. The Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA) provide information in the document [Radiation Emissions from Microwave Ovens](http://www.arpansa.gov.au/radiationprotection/factsheets/is_Microwave.cfm) ([http://www.arpansa.gov.au/radiationprotection/factsheets/is\\_Microwave.cfm](http://www.arpansa.gov.au/radiationprotection/factsheets/is_Microwave.cfm)) on their web site on the safe use and testing of microwave ovens. OHS recommends that management units adopt the following strategies to ensure staff and students have an understanding of safe use of a microwave. Generally speaking commercial microwave ovens are very safe to use and reliable.

- Read the microwave oven's instruction manual thoroughly. Keep it handy so that these can be referred to often.
- Clean the microwave oven regularly to prevent contamination of food; regular cleaning of the microwave can reduce food build up which can result in the microwave arcing and causing damage to the microwave. When cleaning a microwave use soapy water and a soft sponge; do not use abrasive cleaners.
- Only use containers labelled as microwave safe. Glass or ceramic containers that aren't labelled 'microwave-safe' may overheat and cause burns.
- Never use plastic grocery bags, newspaper or plastic containers for frozen foods (such as ice-cream containers) in the microwave.
- Avoid using plastic containers or film unless the manufacturer explicitly states that these items are microwave safe. Otherwise, compounds from the heated plastic can leech into the food.
- Don't allow plastic film to touch the food. Even plastic labelled 'microwave safe' should not touch food to avoid migration of chemicals from the plastic.
- Open or pierce sealed food containers as when sealed containers are heated they may explode and damage the oven rendering it unsafe.
- Use glass containers designed for microwaves to cook high-fat foods, as additives from plastic are more likely to migrate into fatty foods at high temperatures.
- Don't use metal containers or containers with metal trims, aluminium foil or any metal object as such materials can cause arcing, damage to the oven, fires or burn hazards.
- Do not use the microwave if it appears damaged or is not operating properly. It is important that the oven door seals properly. Check that there is no damage to the door seal, hinges, latches and other surfaces. If a microwave is thought to be faulty label as defective, remove power source and arrange for it to be checked by an appropriately qualified person. Secure a [Defective Equipment Tag](http://www.swinburne.edu.au/corporate/hr/ohs/docs/Defective%20Equipment%20Tag.pdf) (<http://www.swinburne.edu.au/corporate/hr/ohs/docs/Defective%20Equipment%20Tag.pdf>) to the appliance so that all personnel are aware it is not to be used.
- Microwaves used for laboratory applications are not to be used for food preparation. Conversely, food preparation microwaves should never be used for other applications.
- Take care when removing containers from the microwave. The container or their contents can



become very hot. When removing plastic film or lids, take care so as to avoid steam burns

- If a fire were to occur within the microwave, leave the door closed, disconnect the power cord, only if safe to do so, and call 000

