



Property Owners Safety Space Heater Safety

During cold weather, many individuals and businesses turn to portable space heaters for supplemental heat. Although these units provide flexibility and efficiency, they can be hazardous if not used correctly.

Space heaters are classified as vented and unvented or “vent-free.” Unvented combustion units are not recommended for use inside your home, because they introduce unwanted combustion products into the living space—including nitrogen oxides, carbon monoxide, and water vapor—and deplete air in the space. Most states have banned unvented kerosene heaters for use in the home and at least five have banned the use of unvented natural gas heaters.

Electric space heaters are generally more expensive to operate than combustion space heaters, but they are the only unvented space heaters that are safe to operate inside your home. **Although electric space heaters avoid indoor air quality concerns, they still pose burn and fire hazards and should be used with caution.**

Improper use of space heaters can result in fire damage to buildings and personal property. Combustible materials placed too close to the portable heater can ignite and start a devastating blaze. Improper use can also lead to severe burns, other bodily injury or even death.

Only use a space heater according to the manufacturer’s instructions. Consider the safety suggestions below:

- Confirm the unit you’re using is “UL” approved and in proper working condition
- Never leave a space heater unattended or go to sleep with one operating

- Only use the space heater according to the instructions provided in the owner’s manual
- Allow a minimum of 3’ between the heater and flammable materials including furniture, drapes and walls
- Keep children away from the immediate vicinity and never allow them to touch the system. Consider safety cages to keep children and small pets at a distance
- Plug electric space heaters directly into wall outlets instead of using extension cords. If an extension cord is necessary, use the shortest possible heavy-duty cord of 14-gauge wire or larger. Always check and follow any manufacturer’s instructions pertaining to the use of extension cords
- Make sure the unit is placed on a solid, even surface
- Never place a space heater directly on a carpet or rug
- Keep electric space heaters away from water and never use them in a bathroom

When using fuel burning heaters:

- Always allow for adequate ventilation and install carbon monoxide detectors in the area(s) of use
- Fuel burning heaters should not be used in a room where there are flammable solvents, aerosol sprays, lacquers, fuel or oil containers
- Never fill a kerosene heater while it is burning and clean up any overfills or spillage before re-igniting

Inspections and Maintenance

It's important to complete a thorough inspection of all space heaters at the beginning of each heating season. Each inspection should consider the following items:

- Condition of fuel lines and tanks
- Condition of all safety guards
- Condition of exhaust systems
- Burner efficiency
- Condition of electrical cords
- Overall cleanliness of unit

Never try to repair a heater yourself. Call a certified technician.

Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

Carbon monoxide is a colorless, odorless and tasteless gas that is produced by the partial oxidation of carbon containing materials. This toxic gas, which is produced by fuel burning space heaters, can reach fatal levels if adequate ventilation is not provided.

When using a space heater indoors, be aware of the early symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning, including:

- Dizziness
- Nausea
- Headache
- Weakness/Fatigue
- Confusion

If you or anyone else experiences any of these symptoms during exposure to a space heater, get fresh air immediately.

For More Information:



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