

Heating Devices – Space Heaters

Use of Space Heaters

According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, millions of consumers rely on portable and in-wall gas or electric space heaters to warm their homes and offices. Many of these users fail to follow important safety instructions, perhaps not knowing that death and serious injury, including burns and carbon monoxide poisoning, can occur.

- ✔ Every year, people receive emergency room treatment for injuries associated with the use of gas, kerosene, oil and electric space heaters.
- ✔ More than two-thirds of those injured are children under the age of five.
- ✔ Half of residential building portable heater fires result because the heat source is too close to combustible materials.

Heater Selection

- ✔ When purchasing a portable heater (gas or electric), be sure that it is an approved model from a recognized testing laboratory, such as Underwriters Laboratories.
- ✔ Assure that it has an automatic shut-off device that will turn the heater off if it is accidentally tipped over or if overheating occurs.
- ✔ Only purchase heaters that are thermostatically controlled.

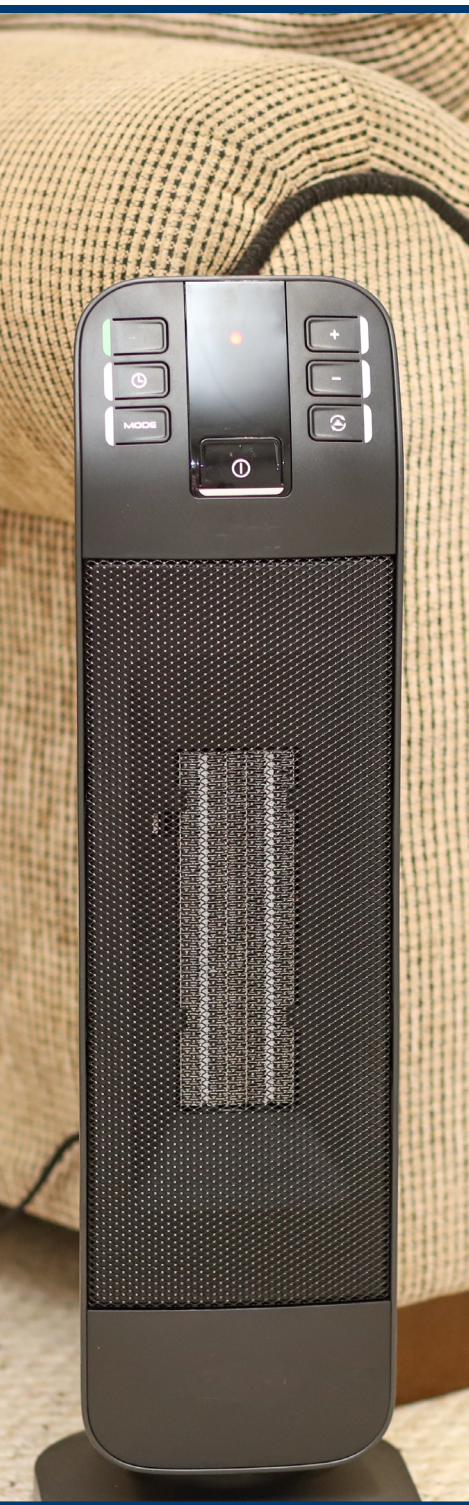
Location of Space Heaters

- ✔ Locate heaters on a level surface and away from traffic and play areas, as well as areas occupied by children.
- ✔ Place the electrical cord out of the main traffic area of a room so that it does not become a trip hazard.
- ✔ Keep them clear of furniture, draperies and other combustibles. Maintain at least 36 inches between the heater and any flammable or combustible material.
- ✔ Notify children and adults about where heaters are located.
- ✔ Fuel-burning heaters require ventilation to prevent the buildup of flammable gases and vapors.

Installation

- ✔ Use qualified service personnel to install or repair in-wall heaters.





Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

Fuel-oil space heaters emit significant amounts of carbon monoxide gas, which is odorless, tasteless and colorless and can kill a person in a short period of time.

- ✔ Non-vented heaters that burn natural gas, liquefied petroleum and other fuels pose the threat of carbon monoxide poisoning. They need to be used where there is access to fresh air to operate safely. Such non-vented heaters have been outlawed in many areas.
- ✔ Symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning can be as mild as drowsiness, headaches and nausea and are frequently misdiagnosed.
- ✔ Exposure to carbon monoxide is of special concern to those with heart problems, the elderly, pregnant women and the very young.
- ✔ Significant overexposure results in severe injuries, including permanent brain damage and death.

Recommendations for Use

- ✔ Never leave a portable heater unattended. Turn off and unplug heaters when leaving the area or when sleeping.
- ✔ Warn children not to insert fingers or other objects into any heater openings where they can be burned or receive an electric shock, and remind them of the hazards of their high surface temperatures.
- ✔ Do not use extension cords with electric heaters.
- ✔ Use only portable heaters that are equipped with an automatic shut-off device that shuts off the heater if it is tipped over.
- ✔ If possible, use heaters that are equipped with automated high temperature switches that prevent them from overheating.
- ✔ Do not use a portable electric heater in a bathroom or around wet or grounded surfaces.
- ✔ Never place a heater near a tub or sink where it could get splashed or fall into the water.
- ✔ Never use a heater in an area where there might be a possibility of an explosive atmosphere.
- ✔ The filling of all fueled heaters needs to be well controlled in a safe and well-ventilated area, away from ignition sources.
- ✔ Never fill a heater when it is hot or in use. Follow all manufacturers' instructions.
- ✔ Never substitute a heater's proper fuel with a different type of fuel.
- ✔ Never convert a heater to a different type of fuel.
- ✔ Never drape or lay materials, such as wet clothing, over a space heater.
- ✔ All heating equipment should be inspected before use and in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

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