Space Heaters

(Portable Heaters)

consumer *brief*

Whether you are using electric, gas, wood or kerosene, you should be aware that space heaters could cause fires or personal injury. In addition, improper ventilation while operating a space heater can cause indoor pollution, or worse, carbon monoxide poisoning.

TIPS FOR BUYING A SPACE HEATER

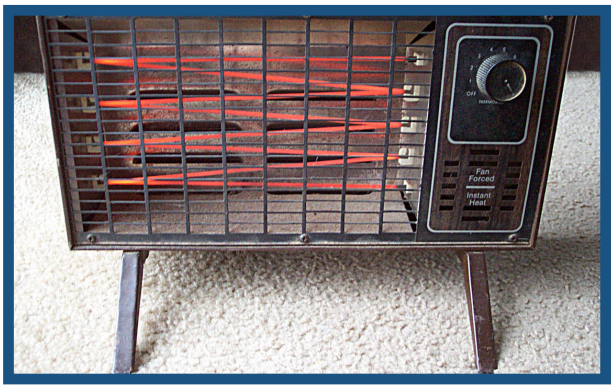
When purchasing a space heater, you should look for a model with:

- An overheat sensor which turns the heater off when high temperatures are reached.
- A grille to keep the heating elements well protected and away from furniture, children and pets.
- An automatic "off" switch in case the heater is tilted backwards, forwards or falls.
- Make sure the model you buy is listed with a recognized testing laboratory. This should be indicated on the box or on the unit itself. Many laboratories test heaters to meet certain safety standards and provide you with care and use instructions. Examples of organizations that certify space heaters are: Underwriters Laboratories (UL) and American Gas Association (AGA).

SAFETY TIPS FOR USING A SPACE HEATER

A space heater should never be used as your primary heat source. It should be a supplemental provider of heat. When using a space heater, you should follow these safety tips:

- Read the manufacturer's instructions before operating your heater. Pay attention to all warnings and safety precautions.
- Make sure that your space heater was not made before 1984. Space heaters made after that year have safety pilots called Oxygen Depletion Sensor or ODS. This sensor closes the space heater when there is not enough fresh air in the room and high levels of carbon monoxide start to accumulate. Look for the label that tells you that your space heater has this device. Old models do not have it.
- Don't leave the space heater unattended at any time or running when you sleep.
- Always keep electric space heaters away from water. Electrocutions or electrical shock could happen if the space heater comes in contact with water. Also, don't ever touch the heater if you are wet.



- Never let small children or pets near your space heater. Hot surfaces and heating elements can cause severe burns.
- Make sure the room you are heating has some ventilation at all times or carbon monoxide poisoning can result from using any fuel-burning heater.

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- If you must use an extension cord, make sure it is a heavy duty cord, #14 gauge or larger. Never put the heater's cord or the extension cord under a carpet.
- Make sure all draperies and furniture are away from heaters. Even a heater with a grille can become hot enough to set drapes or furniture ablaze.
- Never use your space heater to dry clothes or defrost frozen pipes.
- Do not store or use any flammable liquids near your space heater. Vapors can be ignited by the heat or flames of a space heater.
- Have your space heater inspected by a professional at the beginning of the winter season to make sure it is working properly. If a space heater is not maintained, a build up of dangerous carbon monoxide gas could result.
- Use the proper fuel in kerosene space heaters. For kerosene heaters, use only **ASTM 1-K kerosene** to prevent contaminating your home. **Never use gasoline in a kerosene space heater.** Gasoline could ignite or explode, and even a small amount could cause a fire.

GENERAL SAFETY TIPS

- Always have at least one smoke detector on each floor of your home.
- Keep areas around all heat sources free of papers and flammable materials.
- Keep at least one operating dry–power, ABC–type fire extinguisher in the home at all times.
- Develop an escape plan in case of fire. Practice the escape procedure to ensure that all family members will be able to carry it out in the event of an emergency.

SPECIAL NOTE

In New Jersey, kerosene heaters are banned by law from use in commercial establishments and multiple-family dwellings. In addition, some municipalities have ordinances that further restrict your use of kerosene heaters and some types of electric heaters. You should check with your local fire inspector to find out if your municipality has any ordinances about space heaters.

New Jersey Office of the Attorney General

DIVISION OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS

NEWARK
124 Halsey Street
P.O. Box 45025
Newark, NJ 07101
973-504-6200
800-242-5846
(toll free within N.J.)

E-Mail: ***AskConsumerAffairs@dca.lps.state.nj.us***

website:
www.NJConsumerAffairs.gov