



General Tips for Safety When Using Space Heater



The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) estimates that more than 25,000 residential fires every year are associated with the use of room (space) heaters and more than 300 persons die in these fires. An estimated 6,000 persons receive hospital emergency room care for burn injuries associated with contacting hot surfaces of room heaters, mostly in non-fire situations. Although electricity is the safest and most convenient fuel in many heating situations, it is of course not without its inherent risks. Although there is no possibility of a silent killer, like carbon monoxide, emitting into the atmosphere, the dangers of faulty wiring and the inappropriate use of electrical equipment in areas where water is present create a different kind of danger.

- **W**hen selecting a heater, look for one that has been tested and certified by a nationally recognized testing laboratory. These heaters have been determined to meet specific safety standards, and manufacturers are required to provide important use and care information to the consumer.
- **D**on't purchase an electric heater unless it has a tip over switch that will shut off the current if the unit is knocked over, and has a wire grill to keep fingers and flammables away from heating elements.
- **K**eeP children and pets away from space heaters as some heaters have very hot surfaces. Children should not be permitted to either adjust the controls or move the heater.
- **B**uy a heater that is the correct size for the area you want to heat. The wrong size heater could produce more pollutants and may not be an efficient use of energy. Most space heaters are not very stable and are taller than they are wide, making them very easy to tip over.
- **K**eeP doors open to the rest of the house if you are using an unvented fuel-burning space heater. This helps to prevent pollutant build-up and promotes proper combustion. Even vented heaters require ventilation for proper combustion.
- **P**lace heaters at least three feet away from objects such as bedding, furniture and drapes.
- **R**ead and follow the manufacturer's operating instructions. A good practice is to read aloud the instructions and warning labels to all members of the household to be certain that everyone understands how to operate the heater safely. Keep the owner's manual in a convenient place to refer to when needed.
- **N**ever leave a space heater on when you go to sleep or leave the area.
- **N**ever use or store flammable liquids (such as gasoline) around a space heater. The flammable vapors can flow from one part of the room to another and be ignited by the open flame or by an electrical spark.
- **B**e aware that mobile homes require specially designed heating equipment. Only electric or vented fuel-fired heaters should be used.

- **N**ever use heaters to dry clothes or shoes. Do not place heaters where towels or other objects could fall on the heater and start a fire.
- **K**eeP the heater away from water, and never touch it if you're wet.
- **B**e sure the plug of the electrical cord fits snugly into the outlet. A loose plug can overheat. If the cord or plug feels hot to the touch, shut off the heater and unplug it.
- **B**ecause electric heaters draw considerable power, the cord and plug may generate heat.