



PORTABLE INDOOR SPACE HEATERS

*Prepared by Chief Executive Office, Risk Management Branch
Loss Control and Prevention Section*

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Portable heaters are high-wattage appliances that can ignite nearby combustible materials such as paper and clothing. A fire caused by an unattended heater could have catastrophic consequences.

The use of portable electric heaters should only be considered when the need cannot be met by adjusting the building heating, ventilating and air conditioning system (HVAC) system or when all other options have been exhausted.

Safe Use Tips

- Inspect the heater before use.
- Follow all operation and maintenance instructions.
- Never operate a heater that may be damaged.
- Never leave the heater operating while unattended.
- Always keep the heater in plain sight when in use.
- The heater must be turned off any time the room or area being heated is unoccupied, especially at the end of the workday.
- Keep combustible material at least three feet from the front, sides and rear of the heater.
- The heater must be plugged directly into a wall outlet.
- During use, check if the heater plug, cord or outlet faceplate is hot.
 - If the outlet faceplate is hot, discontinue use of the heater and have a qualified electrician check and/or replace the plug or faulty outlet.
 - If the cord is hot, disconnect the heater and have it inspected/repaired by an authorized repair person.
- Never power the heater with an extension cord or power strip.
- Ensure the heater is placed on a stable, level surface and located where it will not be knocked over.
 - Heaters located on filing cabinets, tables, desks or other surfaces are more susceptible to being knocked over, which can result in accidents or fires.
- Only use heaters that are approved with a nationally recognized testing laboratory certification, such as Underwriters Laboratories (UL) or FM Global Technologies (FM).

- Never run the heater's cord under doors, rugs or carpeting. This can damage the cord and/or hide damage to the cord.
- Electric cords must be kept out of foot traffic paths to prevent tripping.
- Keep heaters away from water and never touch the heater with wet hands to prevent electrical shock.
- The heater should have built-in safety features:
 - Thermostat to automatically shut-off when the desired temperature is achieved.
 - Automatic tip-over shutdown feature. If the heater is knocked over, the unit must automatically shut off.
 - Space heaters that are not equipped with a tip-over shutdown feature must have overheat protection, which will automatically shut the unit off if there is an overheat situation.
- Heaters may only be placed on electrical circuits with sufficient capacity to handle the power demands (amperage draw) of the heater and other equipment on the circuit.