

Portable Heaters

Improper use of portable heaters can lead to tragedies such as injuries, deaths, and property damage. Most fire involving portable heaters are caused by improper use, improper fueling or improper maintenance of the heater.

To prevent tragedy the Philadelphia Fire Department offers the following life-saving recommendations:

- The Philadelphia Fire Code permits the use of portable kerosene heaters only in one -and two-family dwellings. The Code does not permit the use of portable propane heaters indoors.
- When purchasing a new portable heater, select equipment that bears the mark of an independent testing laboratory.
- Use and maintain the heater in compliance with the instructions and the Philadelphia Fire Code.
- Keep portable heaters away from combustibles. The heater should be at least 36 inches away from anything that can burn, including furniture, bedding, clothing, pets, and people.
- Space heaters should never be left operating when someone is not in the room or when occupants are sleep.
- Children and pets should be supervised at all times when space heaters are in use.
- Don't use a heater for anything other than to heat a room. It should not be used to cook food, dry clothes, or heat water for humidification.
- If the unit is an electric heater, check it each season for fraying or splitting wires.
- Do not use an extension cord to supply power to a portable electric heater.
- Never block an exit with a portable heater.
- When using kerosene heaters, use only the fuel recommended by the manufacturer.
- When refueling a portable kerosene heater, always turn off the heater, let it cool down, use a fuel gauge to prevent overfilling, and fill the tank outdoors.
- Store kerosene away from heat and open flame in a cool area in a closed, approved container clearly marked with the name of the fuel.
- Anytime you introduce a source of heat, such as a portable heater, into your living space you increase your risk of fire. This increased risk requires additional responsibility. If you decide to use a portable heater, take the proper precautions; and, follow the manufacturer's instructions for proper use and maintenance.