
Safety Tips For Portable Heaters

During the cold winter months, heating-related safety is of utmost concern. Here are general safety guidelines from the North Dakota Fire Marshal Division to help keep your workers and facility safe if you decide to allow the use of portable heaters in your worksites.

Electric Heaters

- Check that electric heaters have the UL ® approval label and an automatic safety switch that turns off the appliance if it is tipped over.
- Be sure to examine cords before plugging in the heater, and if the cords are frayed, worn, or broken, do not use the heater. Either replace the heater or have an electrician replace the cord. Just putting tape on the cord is not enough to prevent overheating and fire.
- Never use extension cords with portable heaters. Using a small, ordinary utility extension cord with a portable heater will cause the cord to overheat and burn.
- Keep all materials that can burn at least 36 inches away from the unit.

Kerosene Heaters

- Many kerosene heater-related fires are attributed to the misuse or abuse of the device.
- Purchase a heater that carries the UL label, which means it has been tested for safety.
- Be sure the heater has an automatic safety switch to shut it off if it should tip over. An automatic starter eliminates the need for matches and makes for safer starts.
- A safety grill on the front can prevent accidental contact burns.

- Follow the manufacturer's instructions for assembly.
- A fuel gauge will help prevent overfilling of the heater.
- Use only crystal-clear IK kerosene; never use colored or contaminated kerosene or any other fuel.
- Always fill the heater outdoors.
- Store kerosene outside in a clearly marked metal container with a tight-fitting lid.
- When using a kerosene heater, be sure the room is well ventilated. Opening a door to an adjoining room or area may be enough. Better yet, slightly open a window in the room.

Safety Note

- Keep any heater at least 3 feet (36 inches) away from anything that might burn, including clothing, papers, scrap, etc.
- Remember that a portable heater will not heat an entire room, so don't try to get a small device to do a big job.
- For best results, direct the heat from a portable heater where you want it.
- Focus the heat where you need it, but not so close that it can cause fires or burns.

For more information, contact CTSI at 303-861-0507.