

# Safeguards For Portable Heaters

## Use of portable heaters

Portable heaters are used extensively in the Construction Industry to permit work to continue during cold weather. They are also used to provide temporary heat in Industrial, Warehouse, and Mercantile buildings, where a permanent heating system is impractical or impaired.

Many serious fires have been caused by portable heaters which are carelessly placed or which lack adequate safeguards. Clearance to combustible materials is critical. Care should be taken to assure that winds cannot blow canvas, plastic or other combustible materials against heaters.

## General safeguards

- Heaters may be fueled by oil, natural gas, or Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG). Gasoline should never be used as a heater fuel.
- All units should have substantial bases to prevent tip-over.
- Tarpaulins used to provide a temporary enclosure for heaters should be of fire retardant materials.
- Manufacturers specifications as to clearances from combustible materials must be strictly adhered to.
- Units should be suitable for use on combustible floors.
- Portable heaters should not be exposed to weather, unless marked "Suitable for Outdoor Use".
- Adequate ventilation must be provided when portable heaters are used in small areas, to avoid improper combustion which can create a hazardous atmosphere for occupants.
- If units are to be left on during nonworking hours, they should be checked at regular intervals.

## Requirements for liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) and natural gas fired heaters

- Units should be placed at least six feet away from any LPG containers.
- Units should be provided with effective gas pilots to control main supply of gas.
- Automatic shut-off controls should be provided to interrupt fuel supply in the event of accidental flame failure, or in case the unit is tipped over.
- Hoses for LPG should be designed for a working pressure of 250 PSI, and with a minimum burst pressure of 15,000 PSI. Length of the hose should be kept as short as practical, preferably not over 10 feet.
- Hoses should be protected by excess flow valves to control gas flow in case the hose should rupture.

Many serious fires have been caused by portable heaters which are carelessly placed or which lack adequate safeguards.

**Storage of LPG within special buildings or rooms**

- Quantities of LPG stored in special buildings or rooms should not exceed 10,000 lbs.
- Walls, floors, and ceiling of LPG storage rooms, within or adjacent to other parts of the buildings should have at least a two-hour fire resistance rating.
- Each opening to the LPG storage room should be protected by a fire door having a 1 1/2 hour rating.
- Electrical equipment should be installed in accordance with Class I, Group D, Division 2, of the National Electrical Code.
- Floors should not be below grade.
- Adequate ventilation should be provided at floor and ceiling levels.
- No open flames should be permitted in the storage room.

**Requirements for oil fired heaters**

- Kerosene or #1 Fuel Oil should be used.
- Continuous electrical spark ignition should be provided.
- Units should be equipped with proper flame safeguards, fuel shut-off, and excess temperature limit control devices.

Contact your local Great American Loss Prevention specialist for additional information.

The loss prevention information and advice presented in this brochure are intended only to advise our insureds and their managers of a variety of methods and strategies based on generally accepted safe practices, for controlling potentially loss producing situations commonly occurring in business premises and/or operations. They are not intended to warrant that all potential hazards or conditions have been evaluated or can be controlled. They are not intended as an offer to write insurance coverage for such conditions or exposures, or to simply that Great American Insurance Company will write such coverage. The liability of Great American Insurance Company is limited to the specific terms, limits and conditions of the insurance policies issued.  
301 E. Fourth Street, Cincinnati, OH 45202 F13507C-LP (01/13)

