

# SUPPLEMENTAL SPACE HEATERS



## NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Use this information as a safety guide for choosing, installing and using space heaters in your home. These heaters are fueled by kerosene, natural gas, propane or electricity. All of these heaters can cause fires. Gas and kerosene heaters can cause buildup of carbon monoxide and nitrogen dioxide in your home. We recommend that you:

- check with local building code or fire officials about requirements in your community.
- install both carbon monoxide and smoke detectors in your home as required by building codes.

### Unvented Heaters

Portable kerosene and unvented gas heaters release combustion products directly into your home. Overusing the heater or using an oversized heater can result in elevated levels of carbon monoxide or nitrogen dioxide fumes in the air. These fumes can cause cold or flu-like symptoms, headaches, and eye, nose and throat irritation. **High levels of carbon monoxide can be fatal.**

#### Portable Kerosene Heaters

Use **ONLY** grade K-1 kerosene. K-2 (even if it looks as clear as K-1) has a higher sulfur content and is used for other purposes. **NEVER** use gasoline. It can explode!

Never add fuel to the heater when it is hot. The fuel can ignite, burning you and your home.



Keep the heater away from things that can burn, such as furniture, rugs or curtains. Follow the manufacturer's advice about placement and use.

Choose a heater carefully. Don't choose a heater that is too large for the space you plan to heat. Choose one that won't tip easily and has a fuel gauge to prevent overfilling.

Check the wick weekly. Clean it if it's dirty and replace it if it's worn.

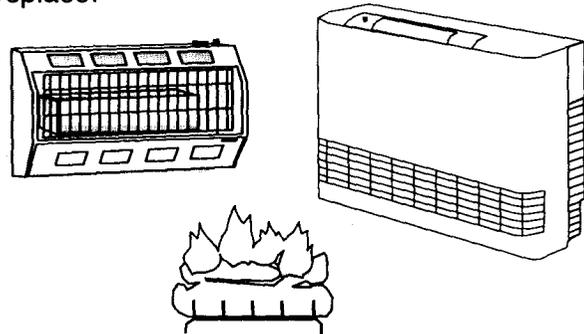
Store kerosene outdoors, in a container used only for kerosene. Don't use kerosene from a prior heating season as it can change and may not burn properly.

Don't use these heaters as your main heat source, even during power failures. Using these heaters for an extended period of time increases the build up of combustion products. A better option is to run a generator outdoors during power failures for heating, refrigeration, etc.

Have these heaters inspected and serviced regularly. Follow the manufacturer's advice about use and maintenance, but service the units at least once a year.

#### Unvented Gas Heaters

Unvented gas heaters do not use a chimney or vent. They are connected to the house fuel supply (natural gas or propane) and may be wall-mounted, free-standing or inserted in a fireplace.



Have the heater installed by a professional (such as your gas supplier) away from the thermostat for your main heater. ALL gas appliances should be professionally installed.

Don't buy an oversized heater (in terms of heat output). Use the sizing guidelines posted where you buy the heater to choose the correct output. The room size not only determines heating needs, it also affects how much air is available to dilute the combustion products.

## Vented Gas Heaters

Vented gas heaters are similar to unvented gas heaters except they are connected to a chimney or other venting system.

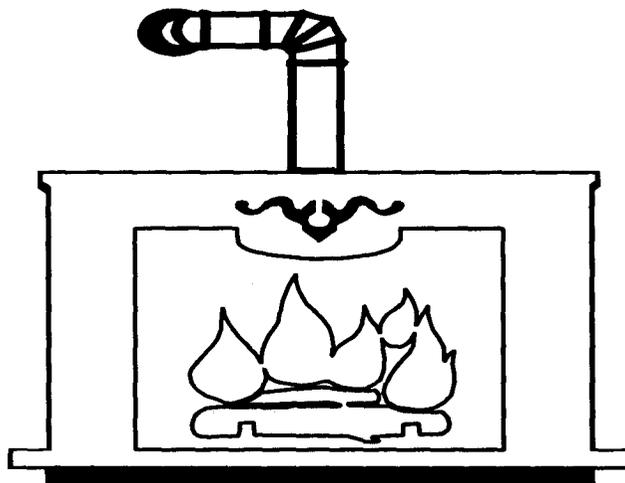
These heaters **must** be connected to a chimney or other venting system.

As with all gas appliances, have the heater installed by a professional.

Check the chimney or flue each fall for any obstructions (such as birds' nests) and clean as needed.

Use your heater in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

Have the heater inspected and serviced at least once a year.

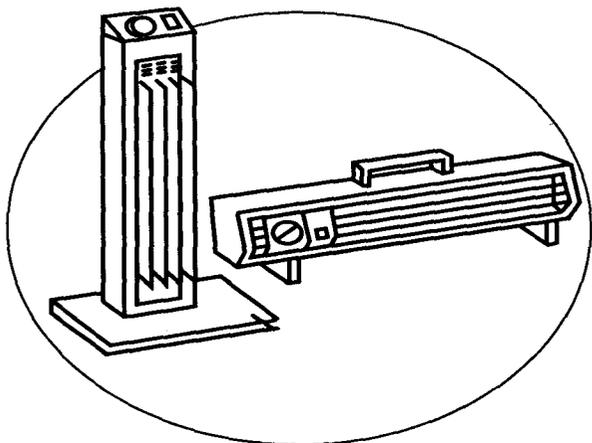


## Portable Electric Heaters

Choose a heater that is listed and approved by a recognized testing agency (such as UL).

Don't use a portable electric heater in rooms with running water (such as a kitchen or bathroom) or in a damp basement, unless connected to ground-fault circuit interruptors. These circuits, also called GFCI, automatically shut down when exposed to water or other shock hazards. Test the GFCI periodically to be sure it is working.

Keep the heater away from things that can burn, such as furniture, rugs or curtains. Follow the manufacturer's advice about installation, placement and use.



Place heater level and on the floor so it won't tip over. Make sure no nearby items can fall onto the heater and ignite.

Avoid using ungrounded wiring or extension cords. Check plugs and wires periodically for fraying and overheating. Replace damaged cords or have a licensed electrical repair person make any repairs. Electrical tape is not always adequate.