

Maryland State Firemen's Association

Fire Prevention and Life Safety Committee

TIP Sheet: SPACE HEATERS



SPACE HEATER SAFETY



Last year the United States Fire Administration reported that 25,000 residential fires were reported by Fire/EMS units in the United States. From this report 6,000 persons were treated by area hospitals for burns associated with the hot surfaces of the space heater and that 300 persons died as direct result of the fires.

Space heaters come in all types and versions:

They are fueled by Gasoline, Kerosene, Wood Burning Products and Electrical models.

- When selecting a space heater make sure that the unit has been tested by a very reputable company. And that the unit meets all safety standards directed by NFPA Life Safety Code 101.
- When purchasing an electric space heater all units made after 1991 must be equipped with a tipping hazard off switch. If you have an older model it is recommended that you replace your heater to accommodate for newer safety standards that have been put in place.
- Never allow children to play around a space heater and remind them that they are not toys. Don't allow them to move or operated the device. Instruct them that only adults should operate a space heater.
- Never leave the unit unattended.
- If you are using a gas, kerosene or wood burning heater that you maintain all safety standards for that unit. Never mix the fuel sources with the space heater. Gas is for gas, kerosene is for kerosene and wood for wood. Any time that you mix the fuel source it will result in a fire or explosion. Never store flammable liquids around the devices. The fumes can ignite.
- Never store any combustible material around the heater. Always ensure that you have a clean three (3) foot radius around the unit.
- Maintain also a solid stable surface for the heater. If the heater is not resting properly on the floor this could cause the unit to tip over and which could result in a fire.
- If you have chosen to use gas, kerosene or a wood burning heater have them checked each heating season. If any of the devices are leaking CO or are missing the required safety devices please discard them and purchase newer units.
- Have a CO meter installed when using any of the carbon based units for measuring CO level associated with the device. The meter should be installed 15-20 feet away from the device and at least 5 feet from the floor and 12 inches from the ceiling. Remember to follow all safety precautions associated with CO and if signs and symptoms persist seek medical assistance.
- Remember these devices are used to specific reasons. Please read all manufacture safety literature that comes with your heater.
- Instruct your family on the importance of the devices and that incase a fire occurs that your family practice your home escape plan and your families safe meeting place and call **911** from a safe location.

