

## SPACE HEATER SAFETY

Every year fire departments around the United States fight dwelling fires caused by the misuse or misplacement of space heaters. These devices are great for warming up the cold room that never seems to stay warm. The trouble is, residents often fail to read the warnings on these gadgets. People also are still using space heaters that may not meet today's standards. The Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) estimates that both fixed and portable heaters are associated with 21,800 residential fires every year, and that about 300 people die each year in fires started by these heaters. Many people don't realize that the silent killer, CO poisoning, is a threat with fuel-burning space heaters.

The following is a list of safety tips that the CPSC has put together to help consumers purchase the right space heater, and to use that space heater safely.

1. Select a space heater with a guard around the flame area or heating element. Place the heater on a level, hard and nonflammable surface, not on rugs or carpets or near bedding or drapes. Keep the heater at least three feet from bedding, furniture or other flammable materials.
2. Choose a space heater that has been tested and certified by a nationally recognized testing laboratory. These heaters meet specific safety standards.
3. Keep doors open to the rest of the house if you are using an unvented fuel-burning space heater. This helps prevent pollutant build-up and promotes proper combustion. Follow the manufacturer's instructions to provide sufficient combustion air to prevent CO production.
4. Never leave a space heater on when you go to sleep. Never place a space heater close to any sleeping person.
5. Turn the space heater off if you leave the area. Keep children and pets away from space heaters.
6. Have a smoke detector with fresh batteries on each level of the house and a carbon monoxide detector outside your sleeping area.
7. Be aware that mobile homes require specially designed heating equipment. Only electric or vented fuel-fired heaters should be used.
8. Have gas and kerosene space heaters inspected annually.

Consumers who would like more information can view or receive a free CPSC booklet, "What You Should Know about Space Heaters", by placing a request at

[www.cpsc.gov/cpsc/pub/pubs/hard.html](http://www.cpsc.gov/cpsc/pub/pubs/hard.html) or by sending a postcard to:

Space Heater Booklet

U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission

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