



SAFETY BULLETIN



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Issued February 10, 2021 by Paul Fowler, Chief Inspector, Fuel Safety, Department of Labour and Advanced Education

Outdoor Patio Heater: DO'S and DON'TS

Legal information

Issued pursuant to section 30 of the Technical Safety Act

Summary

Knowing how to use patio heaters and open-flame appliances safely will help everyone enjoy outdoor dining while avoiding the dangers of carbon monoxide poisoning and fire.

Keep Them Outside

PATIO HEATERS ARE DESIGNED FOR OUTDOOR USE ONLY.

NEVER use them indoors or within an enclosed structure such as a tent to avoid the danger of carbon monoxide poisoning.

PROPANE CYLINDERS SHOULD NEVER BE STORED INDOORS.

They must be stored upright and safeguarded with tamper-proof, vehicle-proof protection, such as a locked cage or fenced-in area. If you need to store your patio heater indoors for security reasons, remove the propane cylinder first.

Look Up and Around

DO install heaters according to the manufacturers' instructions regarding ceiling height clearance and proper distancing from any fire hazards, building openings or mechanical air intakes.

DON'T position patio heaters next to or in the path of an exit, including fire escapes. Do not obstruct firefighting equipment such as fire hydrants and fire department connections.

Keep Them Stable

DO make sure heaters are on a stable surface so they don't get knocked over.

DON'T install heaters on grass or an uneven sidewalk, or near the edge of an elevated platform.

Move Them with Care

NEVER move portable heaters while the flame is lit. Make sure the fuel supply is properly shut off and the unit cool before relocating.

Keep an Eye on Them

NEVER LEAVE patio heaters unattended. Additional caution should be used when children or inebriated adults are in the vicinity.

Safety Certified

Make sure your equipment is certified by a recognized testing laboratory and meets the requirements of the NS Fuel Safety Regulations.

Install Them Properly

All units must be installed as per the manufacturer's instructions. All fixed fuel-fired heating units must be installed by a by a Nova Scotia licensed gas technician.

Propane Cylinder Safety

- Familiarize operators with safe practices for propane cylinder installation, disconnection and leak detection as well as emergency procedures.
- Store propane cylinders upright and protect them against tampering, unauthorized movement, dropping or impact that could result in a leak or fire. Propane cylinders that are not connected to an appliance are considered to be in storage.
- Do not store propane cylinders indoors, or close to operational heaters or near smoking areas.
- Stored propane cylinders must be safeguarded with tamper-proof, vehicle-proof protection, such as a locked cage or fenced-in area.

How to Test Propane Cylinders for Leaks

When installing fuel cylinders, always test for leaks by applying a 50/50 solution of water and dish soap to all propane cylinder connections and hoses. If bubbles appear, gas may be leaking.

Tighten the connection and retest. If bubbles reappear, contact a NS licensed gas technician to repair or replace damaged parts.

Putting Public Safety First

The Safety Branch includes both Occupational Health and Safety and Technical Safety and delivers public safety services on behalf of the Government of Nova Scotia.

Contact for bulletin queries

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