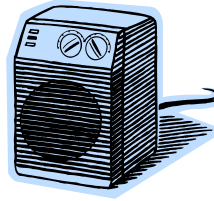
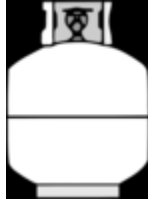




Office of Maine State Fire Marshal
52 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04330
(207) 626-3870
<http://maine.gov/dps/fmo/index.htm>

Tips for Safe Operation of Alternative Heating Devices



When the weather gets cold, many people try to use alternative forms of heat besides wood and oil to heat their living space. The following tips will help you prevent injuries or fires when using these products.

Please do not: use gas or electric ovens to heat areas. Gas stoves can create carbon monoxide (CO) as a byproduct of burning gas, and CO can kill you if the concentration is high enough. Running an electric stove's oven can cost more than running a small space heater, because the stove requires more watts of electricity to run and so it costs more. Open oven doors are hot and can be a tripping hazard, which can cause people and pets to become burned.

Propane and Kerosene Heaters

- ✓ If you run propane or kerosene heaters in a house, make sure you have working carbon monoxide detectors located in areas near the heaters.
- ✓ Kerosene and propane heaters use up oxygen when they burn fuel, so both types of heaters should have oxygen depletion sensors on them that will shut off the heaters if the oxygen level gets too low in the room. To minimize this possibility, make sure there is enough ventilation in the room, perhaps by opening a window an inch or two.
- ✓ The heaters should have safety shutoff switches so they will turn off if they are tipped over. Turn off the heaters before going to bed.
- ✓ Kerosene heaters must be filled with 1-K grade kerosene only: **never** use gasoline to fill a kerosene heater. Turn off the heater and wait for it to cool down before refilling it. It's preferable to refill the heater outside, so fumes and spills won't happen in the house. Don't fill the heater completely: leave some space to allow for expansion of the kerosene liquid.

- ✓ Keep cloth or other combustible items at least 3 feet away from the heater, and don't drape or store anything on top of the heater.
- ✓ Keep an eye on children and pets when a kerosene or propane heater is running. Some parts of the heater may get hot and lead to burns, and the heater may get tipped over during play activities.

Electric Space Heaters

- ✓ Only use electric space heaters that have been approved by nationally recognized testing agencies, such as Underwriters Laboratories (UL). Make sure the heater has a safety shutoff switch so it will turn off if it gets tipped over.
- ✓ Keep cloth or other combustible items at least 3 feet away from the heater, and don't drape or store anything on top of the heater.
- ✓ Turn off and unplug an electric space heater when it isn't being used, or when you go to bed. Make sure electrical cords aren't a tripping hazard, and don't put electrical cords under rugs where they can become worn and create a fire.
- ✓ The preferred way to use an electric heater is to plug it directly into the wall. If you use an extension cord to run the heater, use a heavy-duty cord with a power rating as high, or higher, than the electric heater.
- ✓ Avoid using electric heaters in an area where they can get wet, such as the bathroom or kitchen.
- ✓ Don't run several appliances off the same electrical circuit at the same time that you are using the heater. The circuit can get overloaded and cause a fire.
- ✓ Keep an eye on children and pets when an electric heater is running. Some parts of the heater may get hot and lead to burns, and the heater may get tipped over during play activities.