



Northern Ireland
Fire & Rescue Service

Protecting Our Community

COMMUNITY INFORMATION BULLETIN NO. 20

PORTABLE HEATER SAFETY

With winter approaching, many people will turn on portable heaters to supplement heat during the colder months. However, it is vital that the dangers associated with portable heaters are understood. Investigations by Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service have unfortunately recorded instances where people are putting themselves at serious risk from fire by using portable heaters in an unsafe manner.

By following this simple guidance, people can stay safe and warm this winter:

- Always follow the manufacturer's operating and maintenance instructions;
- Never leave portable heaters unattended;
- Turn off portable heaters whilst sleeping;
- Do not leave portable heaters on, particularly if young children or pets could be left unattended;
- Do not sit or stand too close to heaters; clothing may melt or even ignite;
- Do not dry clothes on portable heaters;
- Ensure there is at least one metre distance from any combustible material such as furniture, bedding or curtains;
- Do not place portable heaters where they could be knocked over easily; and
- Do not use flammable adhesives, cleaning fluids or aerosol sprays near a heater.

Portable Electric Heaters

- Buy a heater that carries the British Safety Mark approval;
- Keep flexes as short as possible and position so that they will not cause a trip hazard;
- Check flex for wear or damage, and fit the correct fuse; and
- Unplug when not in use.



Portable Gas Heaters

- Ensure good ventilation in the room where the heater is to be used;
- Buy a heater that is approved by British and European Safety Standards;
- Change cylinders in the open air if possible;
- If you suspect a gas leak then do not use the heater; remove it to a safe location outside the building; and
- Ensure the heater is serviced regularly by a qualified Gas Safe engineer.



Halogen Heaters

Halogen heaters are an electrical lightweight heater that uses halogen elements (bulbs) rather than electric coils. They can be a safer option to use as the casing remains cooler and, in many instances, will have an automatic shut-down should the heater get accidentally tipped over. However, like all sources of heat, care should be taken when using in the home.

For further information phone NIFRS HQ 028 9266 4221 or visit www.nifrs.org

