

November 2009

SAFETY TIP OF THE MONTH

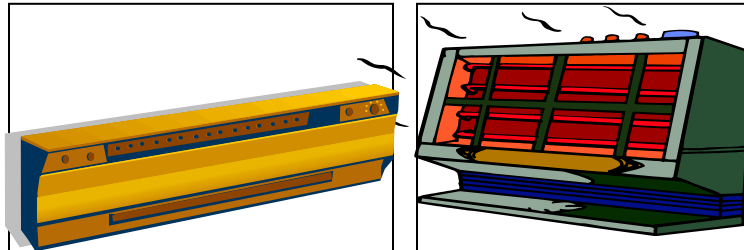
SPACE HEATER SAFETY

With winter weather fast approaching and the condition of the current economy many are looking for cost efficient ways to stay warm. A key question posed is: "Is it safe and efficient to use a space heater?"

According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, it is estimated that more than 25,000 residential fires every year are associated with the use of space heaters, causing more than 300 deaths. Also, an estimated 600 individuals receive hospital emergency room care for burn injuries related to contacting the hot surfaces of room heaters, mostly in non-fire situations.

Therefore, the following guidelines are suggested when purchasing a small space heater:

- Only purchase newer model heaters that have all of the current safety features. Making sure the heater has an Underwriter's Laboratory (UL) label attached to it.
- Choose a heater with a thermostat control, as they avoid the energy



Always keep space heaters on a solid flat surface and away from water, children and pets.

waste of overheating a room.

- Select a heater for the size of the room you wish to heat.

The Underwriter's Laboratories, an independent product-testing organization, advises utilization of the following important safety features.

- A tip-over safety switch, to automatically shut off the heater if it's knocked over;
- Automatic shut off if the appliance overheats – with a manual reset so you can check the unit before restarting it;
- Integrated carrying handle or wheels;
- Cool-to-the-touch cabinet;

- Multiple-year warranty;
- Timer that shuts off the unit after a number of hours;
- Easy to use digital readout.

If you have the need for a heater, the MO Department of Natural Resources recommends selecting the right heater for your needs. There are 3 types to choose from:

1. Radiator-type – for constant use.
2. Convection models – uses natural air flow, surface stays cool to touch.
3. Radiant models – warms people and objects not just the air in the room.

Special Points of Interest

- Brochure about space heaters: <http://www.cpsc.gov/cpsc/pub/pub/098.html>
- Space heater help: http://www.thefrugallife.com/space_heater.html
- Help selecting the right space heater from MO DNR: <http://www.dnr.mo.gov/energy/residential/spaceheaters.htm>
- Space Heater Safety Tips: http://articles.directorym.com/Space_Heater_Safety_Tips-a862710.html