

## Stay Safe With Space Heaters

As temperatures drop, make safety a top priority when using space heaters.

Small space heaters are typically used when the main heating system is inadequate or when someone wants to heat a small area while not overheating the rest of the home.

But if you use or plan to use a space heater, remember safety should be your top concern. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission estimates that more than 25,000 residential fires every year are associated with the use of space heaters, causing more than 300 deaths. Additionally, an estimated 6,000 persons receive hospital emergency room care for burn injuries.

When buying and installing a small space heater, follow these guidelines:

- Only purchase newer model heaters that have all of the current safety features. Make sure the heater has the Underwriter's Laboratory (UL) label attached to it.

- Choose a thermostatically controlled heater, since they avoid the energy waste of overheating a room.

- Select a heater of the proper size for the room you wish to heat. Do not purchase oversized heaters. Most heaters come with a general sizing table.

- Locate the heater on a level surface away from foot traffic. Be especially careful to keep children and pets away from the heater.

- Never leave a space heater left on while unattended.

- Electric heaters should be plugged directly into the wall outlet. If an extension cord is necessary, use a heavy-duty cord of 14-gauge wire or larger.

- For portable electric heaters, buy a unit with a tip-over safety switch, which automatically shuts off the heater if the unit is tipped over.

And remember, space heaters are classified as either vented or unvented (also known as vent free). Unvented combustion units are not recommended for use inside your home, as they introduce unwanted combustion products into the living space, including nitrogen oxides, carbon monoxide, and water vapor.