



Fort Belvoir Directorate of Emergency Services

Fire and Emergency Services Division

6100 Abbot Road

Fort Belvoir, VA 22060

Office: (703) 805-2091 Non-Emergency Dispatch (703) 806-6911



Have a Warm and Safe Holiday!

Fort Belvoir, VA—December 10, 2015 – We can't forecast if we'll see a white Christmas, but chances are it will be cold enough for your home's heating system to run most of the holiday season. And with a house full of holiday company, the last thing you want is a house fire.

Home heating fires are the second leading cause of fire deaths in American homes. Home heating fires in the United States are mostly caused by human error, particularly through the misuse of portable heaters, wood stoves, and fireplaces. Heating safety requires correct installation, maintenance, fueling, and the proper operation of portable, or space, heaters.

Tips for preventing portable heating equipment fires:

- ✓ Keep portable heaters at least three feet away from anything that might burn, including furniture, bedding, clothing, pets, and people.
- ✓ Turn these heaters off when you aren't in the room or when you go to sleep. Don't leave children and pets alone or unsupervised in rooms where space heaters are in use.
- ✓ Make sure that everyone knows how dangerous it is to dry clothing over these heaters or place combustible materials near them.
- ✓ Before using electric space heaters for the first time each season, check for fraying or splitting wires and overheating. If there are problems, have them fixed by a professional, or buy a new heater.
- ✓ Plug space heaters directly into wall outlets; don't use extension cords. And don't overload electrical outlets.
- ✓ Never run the heater's cord under rugs or carpeting. This can damage the cord, causing it and nearby objects to burn.
- ✓ To prevent electrical shocks and electrocutions, always keep electric heaters away from water, and NEVER touch an electric heater if you are wet.

Many home workshops or garages use space and wall heaters that burn propane or natural gas. When using these heaters, the Fire Marshal's Office recommends the following practices:

- ✓ Make sure there is an adequate air supply. Home heaters must have an air supply; without it, they may produce carbon monoxide. If you are using an unvented space heater without an oxygen depletion sensor, keep a window or door slightly open.
- ✓ Make sure that pilot lights are working properly. If your heater has a pilot light and you can't keep it lit, or if the control is hard to operate, have it repaired. All inspections and repairs should be made by trained, licensed service technicians.
- ✓ Turn off the heater(s) (1) If you smell fumes, your eyes sting, or if you feel dizzy or nauseated; (2) If there is a yellow or fluttering flame; (3) If the vent isn't drawing.
- ✓ Don't use space heaters with broken or out-of-place ceramic radiants.

"Keeping the Homefront Safe"



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- ✓ If you smell a strong gas odor, turn off all pilot lights, don't flip on any electrical switches (such as room lights) and call your fire department and gas company from another location. Small sparks from turning on lights or making a phone call could ignite gas.
- ✓ Never store or use flammable liquids like gasoline, cleaning fluid or paint thinner near heaters.
- ✓ Finally, never use the kitchen stove to heat the house, or a grill or other outdoor, fuel-burning apparatus. Whether you have central heat, a fireplace, wood-burning stove, wall heaters, space heaters, or any combination of the above, an annual inspection by qualified professionals will help minimize risk and maximize winter comfort.



SPREAD THE NEWS!

Inform family, friends, and coworkers of the ways to warm up more safely

"Keeping the Homefront Safe"