



STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE DEPARTMENT OF SAFETY
John J. Barthelmes, Commissioner

Division of Fire Safety
Office of the State Fire Marshal
Paul J. Parisi, State Fire Marshal



Office: 110 Smokey Bear Blvd., Concord, NH
Mailing Address: 33 Hazen Drive, Concord, NH 03305
PHONE 603-223-4289, FAX 603-223-4294 or 603-223-4295
TDD Access: Relay NH 1-800-735-2964 ARSON HOTLINE 1-800-400-3526

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

DATE: January 15, 2018
CONTACT: Amy McLaughlin, Public Education Specialist
Paul J. Parisi, State Fire Marshal

Space Heaters Responsible for 4 in 5 Home Heating Fatalities - Pose Deadly Winter Threat

Did you know that nearly half of home heating fires happen in December, January and February? Most tend to involve space heaters (either portable or stationary), and the deadliest fires happen when heaters are too close to things that can burn – like clothing, bedding or furniture.

NH State Fire Marshal Parisi encourages residents to give space heaters plenty of space, and follow manufacturer's instructions closely when using any type of heating equipment. That includes the furnace, wood or pellet stove, or any portable heater. "It's tempting to put wet mittens or boots near the heater so they dry more quickly, or to sit close with a blanket to stay warm. But maintaining a safe perimeter is critical."

There are many types of supplemental heaters, including electric, propane, or oil/kerosene, and variations within those categories - convection, radiant and combination. Each can be dangerous and some aren't meant for indoor use. Those that aren't electric can quickly replace clean air with deadly carbon monoxide.

Parisi says, "If that sounds confusing, go take a look at what you've got. Become familiar and learn how to safely operate whichever kind you have. We know people have a variety of heating sources, especially in parts of the state that are prone to power outages. Just be careful. Space heaters account for 4 out of 5 home heating fire deaths and really do require some knowledge to operate."

Important Safety Tips:

1. Know what kind of unit you have and make sure you're familiar with the manufacturer's instructions.
2. Put it on a flat surface where it can't be easily knocked over—not on top of a table or chair.
3. Inspect cords – make sure the heater's power cord is not frayed or damaged. If the power cord feels hot to the touch, don't use the heater. Call an electrician to inspect it.
4. Prevent electrocution by keeping heaters away from water.
5. Make sure children stay away from an open heater.
6. Monitor heaters while in use – turn off and unplug if leaving the area.
7. Keep space heaters away from walkways, exits, or congested areas.
8. Plug heater cords directly into an outlet. Do NOT run the power cord underneath carpets, rugs or furniture.
9. Make sure your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors are working properly.
10. Check your town's website or call to see if they have additional ordinances related to space heaters.

Fire Marshal Parisi emphasizes, "Do not simply remove a heater from its packaging and turn it on. If your instructions have found their way to the trash, look for the unit's make and model number - you can often find the manufacturer's operating instructions online."

###