



Normal Fire Department

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Temporary Outdoor Heater Guidelines

These guidelines, in accordance with guidelines from the National Fire Protection Association and the International Fire Code, pertain to portable outdoor gas-fired heating appliances, commonly known as patio heaters. These portable heating appliances are typically configured as a free-standing pole, fashioned with a heater and reflector dome/shield at the top, with a broad base arranged for the storage of a 20-pound propane (LPG) cylinder. These appliances may also be designed to appear and function as portable outdoor fireplaces or tall patio tables.

- **Appliance Location** – Portable outdoor gas-fired heating appliances shall not be used:
 - Inside of or within five (5) feet of buildings;
 - Beneath, or closer than five (5) feet to combustible decorations and combustible overhangs, awnings, sunshades or similar combustible attachments to buildings, in addition to meeting or exceeding all manufacturer guidelines and specifications;
 - Inside of tents, canopies, and membrane structures; or
 - On exterior balconies.
- **Tanks / Cylinders** –
 - **Maximum capacity.** The maximum individual capacity of gas containers used in connection with portable outdoor gas-fired heating appliances shall not exceed 20 pounds (standard gas grill-size cylinder).
 - **Container type.** Only gas containers approved by the Department of Transportation (DOT) or American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME) shall be used.
 - **Replacement.** Replacement of fuel gas containers in portable outdoor gas-fired heating appliances shall not be conducted while the public is present.
- **Safety Features** – Portable outdoor gas-fired heating appliances shall be equipped with a tilt or tip-over switch that automatically shuts off the flow of gas if the appliance is tilted more than 15 degrees from the vertical.
- **Storage**
 - **Containers.** Both empty and full gas containers shall be secured from tampering and must be stored outdoors. Containers shall not be stored or located within 10 feet of exit access doors, exits, stairways, or areas normally used, or intended to be used, as a means of egress. Containers shall not be stored on balconies, on roofs or within 10 feet of any operational window or building ventilation inlet.
 - **Appliance.** If the appliance is connected to a fuel gas container, it is subject to the storage restrictions above. If the appliance is disconnected from the fuel gas container, the appliance may be stored indoors.

If you have questions, contact the **Normal Fire Department Prevention Division** at **309-454-9616**.