



Bakersfield Composite Squadron #121

60-Second Safety Advisor #18

Portable Electric Space Heater Safety

While these electric heaters can quickly warm up a cold room, they can pose a significant safety risk and they need to be used in a safe manner. The Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) estimates that half the deaths and one-third of the injuries resulting from electric heater fires occurred at night when family members were asleep and the heater unattended. Some of the common causes for these fires include the use of power or extension cords which can be too small to supply the amount of current required by the typical portable electric heater, heaters located too close to furniture, drapes, bedding, and other combustible materials, and heaters placed on cabinets, tables, furniture, or the like. There are some precautions that you can take: Operate heater away from combustible materials, Avoid using extension cords unless absolutely necessary. If you must use an extension cord with your electric heater, make sure it is marked with a power rating at least as high as that of the heater itself [#14 or #12 American Wire Gauge (AWG)]. Keep the cord stretched out. Do not permit the cord to become buried under carpeting or rugs. Do not place anything on top of the cord. Never place heaters on cabinets, tables, furniture or the like, and never use heaters to dry wearing apparel or shoes.

