

Portable Heating Devices
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With the increase in the cost of heating emergency service stations, we have seen a proliferation of portable heaters being used throughout the country. And as you might expect, the incidence of fire has also increased as a result of the misuse of these devices.

First, if you decide to permit the use of portable heaters in your building, it should be done with adequate rules and regulations. While you would think this not necessary when dealing with emergency service providers, you would have to think again. History has indicated the same poor choices of use that we would expect within the general public.

So when making your guidelines or rules, the following should be taken into account:

- The heater's use should follow manufacturer's instructions. These instructions should be read, understood, and complied with before operating the unit.
- The heater should be maintained and inspected regularly for problems such as poor connections or damaged electrical cords.
- Be certain that electric heaters do not overload circuits.
- Fuel heaters require some sort of ventilation. It should be made certain that the unit is vented in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations and requirements.
- Fuel heaters should use only the fuel for which they were designed. Substitution of another fuel could pose a risk of explosion or fire.
- Be certain that the heaters are turned off when personnel leave the area. In emergency service stations, this could be a problem. As such, all electric heaters should be connected through a timer which will automatically turn off the heater. Timers must meet the requirements of the electrical load of the appliance.
- Heaters should never be placed close to combustible material.

These items as well as others you may develop should be in your policy for the use of such devices. Stay warm, but also be safe!