



WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT PORTABLE ELECTRIC SPACE HEATERS

IF YOU ONLY WANT TO HEAT ONE ROOM OR ONE AREA, A PORTABLE ELECTRIC SPACE HEATER MIGHT BE THE RIGHT CHOICE FOR YOU.

Because they require quite a bit of electricity (and can boost your energy bill significantly), portable electric space heaters are not a good choice for heating very large spaces or multiple rooms.

As a secondary heat source for a small room or a way to add a little heat to a chilly space, like a basement or garage work room—and provided they are used correctly—portable electric space heaters can be a safe and convenient option.

Here are some tips for choosing the space heater that's right for you, and how to use it safely:

TYPES OF PORTABLE ELECTRIC SPACE HEATERS

Portable electric space heaters come in two main types: radiant and convection.

RADIANT HEATERS

Radiant heaters produce infrared radiation that warms bodies and objects rather than the air. Because they direct heat towards a specific area rather than circulate it through the air (they act essentially as “personal” space heaters), they are good for small rooms or spot heating right where one or two people are working in a basement or garage.

- Metal-rod radiant heaters use a heat element placed in front of a shiny reflector that radiates heat.
- Quartz radiant heaters use electric elements packed inside a quartz glass tube that radiates heat.

PICK YOUR SPOT

Space heaters work best in enclosed areas.

If you're trying to heat a room, for example, keep the door closed to help keep the heat in.

If you're trying to heat a small part of a garage or basement, for example, set up your workspace in a corner to help limit the space your heater needs to heat.

IMPORTANT

You should know, however, that while all electric space heaters can pose a fire hazard, metal-rod and quartz radiant heaters can be particularly dangerous. The metal-rod heater can focus too much heat in one place, while the quartz tube is fragile and easily broken. As with all space heaters, please use them carefully.

CONVECTION HEATERS

Convection heaters provide warmth by blowing or pulling air over a heated surface and circulating it through the air. They are the best choice for quickly warming larger spaces and keeping them warm over a longer period.

- Electric-element convection heaters move air over heated wire or coil elements inside the heater. These heaters can heat up a space quickly, but the heat will quickly disperse into the air and the heater will need to cycle on regularly to maintain temperature levels.
- Liquid-filled convection heaters use an electric element to warm a liquid, usually either water or oil. This liquid in turn heats a radiator to create natural air currents. These heaters take longer to heat up than electric-element heaters, but will hold their heat longer, minimizing temperature fluctuations.
- Ceramic convection heaters use a fan to draw air through a ceramic element and blow it through a room. These are the safest electric space heaters because the electric element never gets hot enough to start a fire.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

To ensure you get the safest possible heater, look for one that:

- Is very stable and will not tip over easily
- Has an automatic shut-off that will turn the unit off if it does get tipped over
- Has an overheat sensor that will shut the unit off if the internal temperature gets too high
- Has a grill or other enclosure to ensure child-size fingers cannot get near the heating element, and
- Always follow the manufacturer's directions for proper use.

OTHER THINGS TO LOOK FOR INCLUDE:

- Quiet operation (heaters with fans can be noisy)
- An adjustable thermostat or at least two heat-output settings (high, low, for example) so you can choose how warm you want your space, and
- If you plan to move your space heater from room to room, the lightest possible weight and an insulated handle.

HOW TO USE YOUR SPACE HEATER SAFELY

- Place your space heater on a level, hard inflammable surface, such as a concrete or ceramic tile floor.
- Never go to sleep or let your children go to sleep with the space heater on (use an extra blanket or two instead).
- Never go out of the house with the space heater on. Get into the habit of turning the heater off whenever you go out of the room or leave the space.
- Keep the heater at least three feet away from bedding, drapes and furniture, and do not leave books, newspapers or magazines near the heater.
- Keep children and pets away from the space heater.
- Never dry clothes by draping them over the heater.
- If the heater won't reach a wall outlet, plug it into a heavy-duty extension cord to make sure it does not overheat.



ENERGY-SAVING TIP: USE AN OCCUPANCY SENSOR

To make sure your portable electric space heater turns on only when needed, plug it into a power strip connected to an occupancy sensor.

The sensor will turn it—and anything else on the same power strip, such as a lamp or computer monitor—on and off only when someone is in the room.

LOOKING FOR MORE HELPFUL AND PRACTICAL INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR HOME INCLUDING HOW YOU CAN SAVE ENERGY EVERYDAY?

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