



Fire Prevention Bureau

Information Bulletin

Portable Outdoor Gas-Fired Heaters (Patio Heaters)

Cooler weather conditions find the use of portable outdoor heaters appearing on porches and patios. The Fire Prevention Bureau would like to make sure you are aware of the requirements that pertain to these devices. In many cases, the heaters are not in compliance with the fire code requirements.

Section 603.4.2 of the International Fire Code specifically regulates 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 Restrictions.

In accordance with Section 603.4.2.1 of the Fire Code, portable outdoor gas-fired heating appliances shall be located in accordance with the following regulations:

- Clearance to Combustible Materials. Portable outdoor gas-fired heating appliances shall not be located beneath, or closer than 5 feet to combustible decorations and combustible overhangs, awnings, sunshades or similar combustible attachments to buildings.
- Clearance to Buildings. Portable outdoor gas-fired heating appliances shall be located at least 5 feet from buildings.
- Prohibited Storage or Use. The storage or use of portable outdoor gas-fired heating appliances is prohibited in any of the following locations:
 1. Inside of any occupancy when connected to the fuel gas container
 2. Inside of tents, canopies and membrane structures
 3. On exterior balconies
- Proximity to Exits. Portable outdoor gas-fired heating appliances shall not be located within 5 feet of exits or exit discharges.





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Installation and Operational Requirements.

In accordance with Section 603.4.2.2 of the Fire Code, portable outdoor gas-fired heating appliances shall be installed and operated in accordance with the following regulations:

- Listing & Approval. Only listed and approved portable outdoor gas-fired heating appliances utilizing a fuel gas container that is integral to the appliance shall be used.
- Installation & Maintenance. Portable outdoor gas-fired heating appliances shall be installed and maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
- Tip-over Switch Required. 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.
- Guard Against Contact Required. The heating element or combustion chamber of portable outdoor gas-fired heating appliances shall be permanently guarded to prevent accidental contact by persons or material.

Fuel Gas Containers.

In accordance with Section 603.4.2.3 of the Fire Code, fuel gas containers for portable outdoor gas-fired heating appliances shall comply with the following:

- Approved Containers. Only approved DOTn or ASME gas containers shall be used.
- Container Replacement Restriction. Replacement of fuel gas containers in portable outdoor gas-fired heating appliances shall not be conducted while the public is present.
- Container Capacity Limitation. The maximum individual capacity of gas containers used in connection with the portable outdoor gas-fired heating appliances shall not exceed 20 pounds.
- Prohibited Storage of Containers. Gas containers shall not be stored inside of buildings, or in any location near exit access doors, exits, stairways, or areas normally used, or intended to be used, as a means of egress. Containers not connected for use shall not be stored on roofs.
- Outside Storage of Containers. Gas containers approved for outside storage shall be located in a manner that minimizes exposure to excessive temperature rise, physical damage, and/or tampering, which includes a lockable, ventilated metal cabinet or other approved enclosure.

**Please contact the Greenville City Fire Department – Fire Prevention Bureau
at (864)-467-4450 with any questions.**

