



PARTNERING WITH TOWNSHIPS

TOWNSHIP OFFICIALS OF ILLINOIS RISK MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION **RISK REMINDER**



Portable Heaters

Feel that chill in the air? The fall season is just about gone and winter will be quickly upon us. There is no better time to talk about portable heater safety.

Portable heaters are used to keep us warm. Because people work better and more safely when they are warm, heaters can increase productivity. This advantage comes with a very significant problem - portable and stand-alone heaters have great potential to start fires.

Keep a ten-foot clearance between portable heaters and any combustible objects including walls and curtains. Follow the instructions in the owners' manuals carefully. Never move a heater or add fuel when it is turned on or hot. If your portable heater is electric, it should have a UL (Underwriters Laboratory) or CSA (Canadian Standards Association) mark. Make sure it is plugged in directly to a wall outlet and that it won't overload the circuit.

Make sure the heater is on solid footing. The floor is usually the best location; don't put a heater on a table, chair, or pile of materials. If your portable heater uses liquid fuel, let it cool down and move it outdoors for refueling. Maintain good ventilation with fresh air to avoid an oxygen deficient atmosphere and the buildup of carbon monoxide and other exhaust gases. Keep a fire extinguisher nearby.

Fuel gases such as propane are heavier than air and will settle into low spots like drains, sumps, pits, basements and stairwells. Flames and sparks can ignite these gases and cause a fire or explosion. You must be careful when working around these heaters and fuel sources. Keep propane heaters away from extra propane tanks. Propane tanks should be kept upright. Store them securely and in a place where they will not be damaged. If a gas odor is detected, immediately discontinue use until the source of the leak is located and repaired.

Portable heaters allow productivity while keeping us more comfortable on the job, but they require great care. Fire is an ever-present danger - even with electric heaters - because of the presence of very hot surfaces and flames. If you use portable heaters carefully, you can stay warm and safe.

For more information, contact TOIRMA at (888) 562-7861

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