

MSU - Dawg Tracks

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MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™
EXTENSION

Propane Heaters

The weather is finally getting cold here and propane is a common fuel used for portable heaters. While a great option to warm up your chilly work area, shop, barn, or hunting house, be aware of precautions to stay both warm and safe.

Know the difference between indoor-safe and outdoor only propane heaters:

Outdoor use only heaters burn fuel at a higher rate, therefore increasing the risk for carbon monoxide poisoning. Never use them inside, even temporarily.

Indoor safe heaters feature an oxygen depletion sensor (ODS) that will automatically shut the heater off if the available air flow is reduced below a safe level.

Noted Safety Tips:

- ✓ Don't place a heater directly on a plywood floor -- position it instead on a 4-foot by 4-foot square of fire-resistant drywall or cement-board.
- ✓ Keep at least 3 feet of clearance from any object around heater. Heaters used in the vicinity of combustible tarpaulins, canvas, or similar coverings shall be located at least 10 feet from the coverings.
- ✓ Do not use heaters in a manner for which they were not intended (e.g., cooking or warming/drying clothing).
- ✓ No matter how cold, no fuel-burning appliance, including indoor-safe appliances, should be left unattended or operated while sleeping.

Propane heaters need oxygen to breath. If you have a propane heater in a small space, like a shooting house, camper or small room, and it's running on high, it is probably consuming some of the oxygen you need to breathe. Even with indoor-safe models, be sure to frequently open a door or window to let in fresh air. An air tight space could become a bad thing when using a propane heater.

Carbon Monoxide (CO) poisoning is a serious concern when using any fuel burning heaters. CO is produced from the incomplete gas combustion. Properly functioning heaters produce "ideal burns" and present no danger. However a small malfunction over time from use or improper adjustment could result in an atmosphere for CO poisoning.

Know the Signs and Symptoms of CO Poisoning:

- Dull headache
- Weakness
- Dizziness
- Nausea or vomiting
- Shortness of breath
- Confusion
- Blurred vision
- Loss of consciousness



Sources:

<http://campsafe.org/2014/02/07/hello-world-2/>
<https://www.cenex.com/about/cenex-information/cenexperts-blog-page/propane/propane-heater-safety>
<https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/regulations/standardnumber/1926/1926.154>
<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/carbon-monoxide/symptoms-causes/syc-20370642>

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