



# Sanford Fire Department

PO Box 3729  
Sanford, NC 27331-3729  
www.sanfordnc.net

(P) 919-775-8316  
(P) 919-775-8311  
(F) 919-708-5492

## KEROSENE HEATERS

Heating bills have continued to be a source of frustration and sometimes hardships for many individuals. In an effort to resolve that problem, some consumers are turning to alternative heating methods such as wood burning stoves, electric space heaters, and kerosene heaters.

Kerosene heaters have been around for many years the newer models are more economical, portable and safer to use. Despite their improvement, fires caused by kerosene heaters continue. Most fires are caused by improper use of the heater by the consumer.

### When selecting a kerosene heater:

- Heat Output: Portable kerosene heaters are not designed to heat the whole house, usually one or two rooms. Read the instructions
- Safety Listing: Confirm the heater has been tested by one of the major safety laboratories, such as UL for safety features
- New/Used Heaters: Second hand heaters or used heaters may have safety features compromised. The owners manual or operating instructions are essential to understand the proper use. Other points to consider: checking the condition of the tip-over switch, fuel gauge, ignition system, fuel tank and the general overall condition of the appliance.
- Safety Features: Does the heater have its own igniter or do you have to use matches, is the heater equipped with an automatic shutoff.

### Proper Use:

Always follow the manufacturer's instructions; pay particular attention to the ventilation information. Heaters should never be left burning overnight or while sleeping.

There is potential for adverse health effects caused by pollutants produced by un-vented heaters. If dizziness, drowsiness, or respiratory irritation occurs, shut off the heater at once and move to fresh air, and call 9-1-1. Install a carbon monoxide alarm in your home.

Place the heater *no closer than 3 feet* to combustible materials such as drapes, furniture, or wall coverings. Keep doorways clear, a heater should not block your escape. Keep children and pets away from the heater while it is operating. Some heater surfaces can reach temperatures of several hundred degrees under normal operating conditions.

### Refueling the heater:

Careless refueling is another cause of kerosene heater fires. Never refuel heaters while they are hot.

**To prevent a refueling fire and unnecessary injuries:**

- Refuel the heater outdoors and only after it has cooled
- Refuel the heater to only 90% full.

**Buying the correct fuel and storing it safely:**

Your heater is designed to burn high quality crystal clear 1-K kerosene. The use of any other fuel, including gasoline and camping fuel can lead to a fire. Never use any fuel that is discolored, kerosene has a distinct odor that is different from camping fuel and gasoline. Many serious fires have occurred as a result of accidentally contaminating the kerosene fuel with gasoline.

- Keep 1-K kerosene in a container clearly marked KEROSENE. The container should be a distinctive color, either blue or white to distinguish the container from the familiar red gasoline container.
- Never put fuel in a container that has been used for gasoline or any other liquid
- Instruct anyone buying fuel for your container that only 1-K kerosene is to be put in the container
- Watch your container being filled, the pump should be marked kerosene, and the color will be clear.

Store your container safely, in a cool dry place and out of the reach of children. Never store the container near a heat source or inside your home.

**Care of the wick:**

Portable kerosene heaters have a wick made of fiber glass or cotton

Fiber glass and cotton wicks are not interchangeable, replace your wick only with the exact type recommended by the manufacturer. Always consult your owner's manual

**If you have a fire:**

Sound the alarm, get everyone out of the house. Call the fire department from your cell phone or a neighbor's house. Never try to go back into a burning house for any reason

Fighting the fire yourself is dangerous, fire injuries and deaths involving kerosene heaters have occurred because an individual attempted to fight the fire or move a burning heater outside