

Heaters

HEATERS AND OPEN FIREPLACES ARE POTENTIAL DANGER AREAS FOR CHILDREN. IF ACCESSIBLE, IT CAN INFLICT A SERIOUS BURN IN LESS THAN A SECOND.



Compared with an air conditioner or gas heater, an electric heater may not be the most efficient or cost-effective way to heat a room. However, if you're renting or don't have a gas outlet, a convection or column heater can help take the chill out of a small living area or bedroom.

A heater with a fan is best for warming a small area such as a bedroom or study, while the near-silent operation of a column heater also has its advantages.

If you want the best of both worlds, some of the heaters operate with the fan on to reach optimum temperature and then allow you to turn the fan off and let the radiant element keep the room at a stable temperature.

If portability is important, the convection models are significantly lighter than their column counterparts.

Visit choice.com.au for a review and compare of electric heaters.

Using Guards

It is strongly recommended that open fire, pot bellied stove, gas or electric heater be enclosed by a guard while in use.

A properly fixed guard that is firmly attached to the wall will:

- Prevent contact with flames and hot surfaces including flues;
- Prevent contact with clothing which could ignite; and
- Prevent children displacing or removing the guard.

Guards should be about 700mm high. If the openings in the mesh of the screen are 20mm or smaller, the guard should be placed at least 150mm clear of any hot surface.

If the openings are larger, the guard should be 500mm clear of hot surfaces to prevent children from putting hands or objects towards the hot surface.

Things to consider when purchasing a heater

Ensure that:

- The heater is not too hot to the touch as this may cause a burn.
- The element is encased so that a child is unable to touch the hot element.
- There are no gaps or slots that a child could drop money or other hazards into the heater.
- There is a safety cut out feature, which will activate when / if the heater tips over.
- The heater has an in-built child safety lock.
- Consider reverse cycle heating / air conditioning as a safer heating option.
- Radiating heaters are not a recommended heating option.





fact sheet

SAFE PRACTICES WHEN USING HEATERS AROUND CHILDREN

- Read the manufacturer's instructions and warning labels before using your portable electric heater.
- Place a heat resistant fireguard around the heater. If using open fireplaces, place fireguard 900mm away from heat source. Ensure that the fireguard can be secured to the walls or floor to prevent a child from pushing it onto the heat source.
- **DO NOT** leave operating heater unattended and always unplug heater when not in use.
- **DO NOT** use your heater with a power strip or extension cord. Overheating of a power strip or extension cord could result in a fire.
- String out cords on top of area rugs or carpeting. Placing anything, including furniture, on top of the cord may damage it.
- Keep combustible materials, such as furniture, pillows, bedding, papers, clothes and curtains at least one metre from the front of the heater and away from the sides and rear.
- **DO NOT** block heater's air intake or exhaust source.
- Keep flammable materials away from the heater.
- Unless the heater is designed for outdoor use or in bathrooms, **DO NOT** use in damp or wet

Develop a home fire escape plan and include fire survival skills like "Get Down Low & Go Go Go!" and "Stop Cover Drop & Roll."

Ring 000 in an emergency.

- areas. Parts in the heater may be damaged by moisture.
- Check periodically for a secure plug/outlet fit. If the plug does not fit snugly into the outlet or if the plug becomes very hot, the outlet may need to be replaced. Check with a qualified electrician to replace the outlet.
- Unplug the heater when not in use by pulling the plug straight out from the outlet. Inspect the heater's cord periodically. **DO NOT** use a heater with a damaged cord.
- **DO NOT** plug any other electrical device into the same outlet as your heater. This could result in overheating.
- Heaters should be kept away from children and not be placed in a child's room without supervision
- Place heater on a level, flat surface. Only use heater on table tops when specified by the manufacturer. **DO NOT** place your heater on furniture. It could fall, dislodging or breaking parts in the heater.
- Dress children in low fire risk clothing.
- Ensure smoke detectors in the house are in working order – check regularly.
- Do not leave a heater on all night in a child's room – this could cause overheating. A safe practice is to turn on the heater to warm the room and then turning it off when the child is left to sleep in the room.



KIDSAFE NEW SOUTH WALES Inc.

Kidsafe House
Hainsworth Street
Locked Bag 4001
WESTMEAD NSW 2145
Ph: 02 9845 0890 Fax: 02 9845 0895
kidsafe@chw.edu.au
kidsafensw.org