

# Space heater safety: 5 tips to help prevent house fires.



Every year, space heaters cause more than 25,000 residential fires, and the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission estimates they're associated with more than 300 deaths and 6,000 trips to the emergency room. So while coziness is, of course, a concern, safety should be your top priority.

To see how you can practice space heater safety, read on for five tips from our experts. Then, learn more about the fire hazards in your home, with even more insights from our safety services team (see end of blog post).

## Discover five space heater safety tips:

1. **Choose a newer model with modern safety features.** Look for a unit with a tip-over safety switch, which means it will automatically turn off if it tips over, and an automatic shutoff, which will cut the power when the space heater reaches a certain temperature. Bonus: Some units also come with a sensor that can detect a blocked air passage, which can help prevent your space heater from overheating.
2. **Keep it flat on the floor.** We're sorry to be the bearer of bad news, but shelves, stools, and wooden workbenches or desks are all off limits. Your space heater should be flat on the floor to reduce the risk of it falling, tipping over, or overheating - all of which could cause a fire.
3. **Keep it three feet from anything flammable.** Follow the Consumer Product Safety Commission's "three-foot rule," which states space heaters should be at least three feet from curtains, furniture, pillows, bedding, paperwork, etc.
4. **Don't leave it unattended.** It's important to keep a close eye on your space heater, which is why many instruction manuals warn against using them while you sleep. You'll also want to

pay special attention to it if you have children or pets – ensuring they don't knock it over or put anything flammable on or near it.

5. **Plug it into a wall outlet.** No surge protectors, extension cords, or GFCI outlets. To avoid overloading the circuit, which could result in a fire or internal electrical damage, manufacturers advise against plugging your space heater into anything that's not a wall outlet. Plus, they suggest keeping it a few feet away from the wall where it's plugged in.

As a last line of defense, if you're using a space heater in your home, make sure you have smoke detectors on every level of the house and in every bedroom. Then, test them monthly and keep a fire extinguisher on hand.

For more information on the fire hazards in your home, read our blog post: [How to prevent a house fire: 7 tips to spark safety.](#)