

Space Heater Fire Safety

Space Heater Fires in 2003

Seventeen space heater fires were reported to the Office of the State Fire Marshal in 2003. These fires caused three civilian injuries and an estimated dollar loss of \$300,000. Seventy percent (70%) of these fires were caused when combustible materials such as bedding, rubbish or furniture were too close to the heater, and another 15% were caused by an electrical failure such as an overloaded extension cord.

Safety Tips

If you must use a space heater for heat, use it as safely as possible.

- When buying a heater, look for one that has been tested and labeled by a nationally recognized testing company.
- Keep the heater at least arms length away from drapes, furniture or other flammable materials. Place it on a level surface away from areas where someone might bump it and knock it over.
- If you must use an extension cord, make sure it is a heavy duty cord marked with a power rating at least as high as that on the label of the heater itself. (These are usually orange colored.)
- Never leave a space heater unattended or running while you sleep.
- Keep electric heaters away from water. Never use them near a sink or in the bathroom.
- The sale and use of unvented kerosene heaters is illegal in Massachusetts.



FireFACTORS

**Office of the State Fire Marshal
Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

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