



## FACT SHEET

### No. 46 – Portable Outdoor Gas Heaters

Version 02

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#### FACT

Portable outdoor gas heaters are known to cause fires if they are incorrectly stored, not properly maintained and placed too close to awnings or other combustible materials.

#### SAFE OUTDOOR GAS HEATER USE

Portable outdoor gas heaters, also known as patio heaters, are a popular way to make outdoor dining possible during the winter months. These heaters are becoming increasingly popular among homeowners but are more widely used by restaurants and outdoor entertainment venues. The fire services recommend this simple safety checklist:

- Only use in well ventilated outdoor areas and on stable, level ground.
- Keep clear from overhead coverings such as awnings, shade sails and other combustible materials which can be ignited. The manufacturer's instructions will show the necessary clearances from combustible materials.
- Never store inside a building and minimise the number of gas heaters stored on site. Australian Standard AS1596 does not permit storage within a restaurant or a café of any cylinder more than 4.5kg capacity and a total combined capacity of 20kg for all cylinders. Gas cylinders must be stored outdoors in an approved, secure location.
- Have a nominated gas supervisor who knows how to safely use the heaters and always ensure children are supervised by an adult around outdoor heaters.
- Always read and follow the manufacturer's instructions for maintenance. Outdoor gas heaters do require safety checks and regular servicing (every two years). Gas cylinders and hose fittings must be checked for faults and damage regularly.
- Watch for warning signs. Gas flames and radiant panels that burn yellow or produce soot are not working properly and require servicing.
- If a gas leak is detected, turn it off at the cylinder if safe to do so and call the Fire Brigade.
- Decanting – the transfer of gas from one cylinder to another – should not take place at catering and hospitality premises. A dedicated area which complies with Australian Standard AS1596 is required for any decanting. Serious injuries and damage have resulted from illegal decanting by untrained people.
- Heaters must be Australian Gas Association certified (as shown by a badge attached to the heater).

#### FIRE SAFETY TIPS

- Heaters must be Australian Gas Association certified (as shown by a badge attached to the heater).
- Where ever possible, use fixed natural gas supply heaters.
- Fixed supply units offer a safe, affordable and permanent outdoor heating solution for hospitality businesses. Restaurants, bars and cafes are a dynamic environment where customers can also contribute to the risk by moving or adjusting portable heaters.
- Fixed supply units eliminate this potential hazard, as well as eliminating the need to store and handle LPG cylinders on site.



For more information contact your local fire station or visit:  
[www.fire.nsw.gov.au](http://www.fire.nsw.gov.au) or [www.rfs.nsw.gov.au](http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au) or [www.esa.act.gov.au](http://www.esa.act.gov.au)

**IN AN EMERGENCY CALL TRIPLE ZERO (000)**

**PREVENT PREPARE PROTECT**

