

Gas Information Sheet 11

Portable heaters for use outdoors and in public places



This gas information sheet provides information about portable gas heating for use outdoors and in public places, and available portable gas heater types.

The increasing popularity of these appliances raises certain safety concerns. (Local councils may also have planning approval requirements that must be met before they can be used.) As a result, Energy Safe Victoria (ESV) considers fixed outdoor heaters to be a safer means of heating because it removes the risks associated with:

- LP gas cylinders being stored onsite
- potential leaks when changing cylinders
- appliances being accidentally disturbed.

General safety

There are a series of general safety guidelines you should follow when using portable gas heating for use outdoors and in public places:

- Members of the public must not be permitted to operate or relocate a portable heater in a public place, which should be always appropriately supervised.
- LP gas cylinders, the storage and use of which should be properly safeguarded and supervised, must be:
 - located at least 1 meter from a doorway
 - stored in accordance with AS/NZS 1596, Storage and Handling of LP gas.
- Whether the heater is purchased or hired, always ensure it has been certified by one of the following certification bodies¹:
 - Australian Gas Association (AGA)
 - SAI Global
 - IAPMO (International Association of Plumbing and Mechanical Officials)
 - Global-Mark
 - Vipac
 - BSI Group Australia.
- Appliances certified only for outdoor area use must not be used indoors. AS/NZS 5601.1 Gas installation Part 1: General installations, Appendix I, defines what an outdoor area is.
- Always follow the heater manufacturer's installation and operating instructions.

Heater types

Two popular outdoor heater types include portable radiant panel heaters and patio heaters.

Radiant panel heaters

Radiant panel heaters:

- are often fixed to a frame that also holds an LP Gas cylinder, which should be trolley-mounted for mobility and security, and may require extending before use to meet the recommended height requirements

¹ The certification number is usually on the heater's data plate, but be aware that certification may only cover the actual heater and not any associated mounting frame or fixing method.

- for safety reasons should be:
 - at least 500 millimetres from the LP Gas cylinder
 - placed against a wall to avoid creating a hazard or obstruction.

When selecting a location, always ensure that any combustible materials above and around the heater meet the clearance requirements as per the heater manufacturer's instructions.

Patio heaters

Patio heaters:

- must be located in an open area because they provide 360° radiant heat
- are generally pole-mounted with a weighted base that contains an LP gas cylinder to provide stability.

Always be careful to select a safe location. Avoid sloping or unstable surfaces, and be aware that an unsecured heater will become less stable as the cylinder empties.

Further information

Contact ESV's Technical Information Line on 1800 652 563, or email gastechnicalenquiry@energysafe.vic.gov.au.

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