

# Safety Around The Home

## Warm To These Ways To Be Both Safe And Comfortable

(NAPSA)—Heating equipment is the second-leading cause of home fires in the United States—more than 65,000 home fires are attributed to heating equipment each year—but a few simple steps can help you keep your home and family out of such statistics.

Portable electric space heaters can be a convenient source of supplemental heat in cold weather; they can also increase the risks of fire or electric shock if not used properly. Problems can result when space heaters are without adequate safety features, placed too close to combustibles or improperly plugged in.

To help, the experts at the Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI) offer these tips on staying safe and warm:

- Make sure your space heater has a label indicating that it has been approved by a recognized testing laboratory.

- Before using any space heater, read the manufacturer's instructions and warning labels carefully.

- Inspect the cord periodically for damage, such as cracked or broken plugs or loose connections. Don't use a heater with a damaged cord.

- Never leave a space heater unattended. Turn it off when you leave the room or go to sleep. Don't leave children or pets unattended in a room with a space heater.

- Space heaters are only meant to provide supplemental heat and should never be used to warm bedding, cook food, dry clothing or thaw pipes.



**It's a hot idea to use a space heater properly to help keep your home and family safe and warm.**

- Install smoke alarms on every floor of your home, inside each bedroom and outside all sleeping areas. Test them monthly.

- Heaters must be kept at least three feet away from anything that can burn, including bedding, papers, clothing and rugs.

- Locate space heaters out of high-traffic areas and doorways where they may pose a tripping hazard.

- Plug space heaters directly into a wall outlet. Don't use an extension cord or power strip or plug any other electrical devices into the same outlet as the heater.

- Place space heaters on level, flat surfaces. Never put them on top of furniture.

- Always unplug and safely store the heater when it's not in use.

To help educate consumers about the importance of using space heaters properly, ESFI has a variety of tools and resources, including an animated space heater safety video on the Web at [www.electrical-safety.org](http://www.electrical-safety.org).