

# SAFETY TIPS

## Patio Heater Safety Guidelines



Knowing how to use patio heaters and open-flame appliances safely will help everyone enjoy outdoor dining well into the fall and winter season – while avoiding the dangers of carbon monoxide poisoning and fire.

### Use patio heaters outside

- Use them outside; patio heaters are designed for outdoor use only.
- Propane cylinders should never be stored indoors.
- Cylinders must be stored upright and safeguarded with protection that is tamper-proof and could withstand vehicle impact, such as a locked cage or fenced-in area.
- If you need to store your patio heater indoors for security reasons, remove the propane cylinder first.

### Look up and around

- Install the heaters according to the manufacturers' instructions regarding ceiling height clearance and proper distancing from any fire hazards, building openings or mechanical air intakes.
- Fire hazards can be located around, above, or underneath heating units and can include combustible materials such as umbrellas, awnings, tent walls, tablecloths, paper products, decorations, etc.
- Do not position patio heaters next to or in the path of an exit, including fire escapes. Do not obstruct firefighting equipment such as fire hydrants and fire department connections.
- Do make sure that propane cylinders are not stored near operating heaters or smoking areas. A cylinder is considered to be in storage when not connected to an appliance.



### PROPANE SAFETY

- Propane is a safe and reliable energy source.
- Propane is stored and transported in its compressed liquid form, but by opening a valve to release propane from a pressurized storage container, it is vaporized into a gas for use.
- Propane is an odourless gas to which an odourant called mercaptan has been added to give it a sulfur smell – like rotten eggs – to help detect leaks.
- Immediately leave the area if you smell propane. If safe, close the supply valve on the propane containers.
- Seek medical attention if you are showing physical symptoms of CO poisoning (headaches, nausea, dizziness, drowsiness, confusion, impaired judgement, loss of manual dexterity).
- Propane cylinders must be inspected and requalified every 10 years.

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### Keep them stable

- Make sure heaters are on a stable surface so they do not get knocked over.
- Do not install heaters on grass or an uneven sidewalk, or near the edge of an elevated platform.
- Make sure all free-standing units have an anti-tilt feature.

### Move them with care

- Never move portable heaters while the flame is lit. Make sure the fuel supply is properly shut off and the unit cool before relocating.
- Use caution when moving propane cylinders to avoid dropping or impact.
- Make sure heaters are on a stable surface so they do not get knocked over.

### Safely transport cylinders

- Disconnect cylinders and plug or cap all outlets before you go.
- Never leave a cylinder in a parked vehicle with the windows up. Heat builds up quickly and could cause an explosive release of propane in the vehicle.
- Always carry the cylinder in an upright position with the safety valve on top.
- Do not transport cylinders in an enclosed space. Open windows, a propped open trunk, or a ventilated truck box are safe ways to transport a cylinder.
- Secure the cylinder in the upright position so it cannot tip over while you are driving.
- Do not transport or use propane containers that are damaged, show signs of corrosion, have been exposed to fire, or appear to be leaking.



### Filling propane cylinders - regulation requires:

- Filling must be done by personnel trained for that purpose.
- All propane cylinders are filled to a maximum 80% liquid level for safety reasons, which is not possible with refill kits.
- The cylinder sold in refill kits is approved under specification TC-4BAM and can be refilled, but cylinders known as a 'single trip' or 'non-refillable' cylinder cannot be refilled – it is difficult to distinguish the difference between refillable and non-refillable cylinders. Refilling non-refillable cylinders is a safety risk as it is not designed to handle the refilling pressure.
- Do not attempt to refill aerosol containers or any cylinder that is manufactured and marked as TC-39M.

### Questions:

- Contact a qualified dispenser to determine if a cylinder can be filled properly.
- Propane fuelling station locations can be found on the [Canadian Propane Association website](#).