

# *Catholic Mutual. . ."CARES"*

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## **FIRE PREVENTION**

### **SPACE HEATERS – WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW**

The Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) estimates that more than 25,000 residential fires each year are associated with the use of space heaters. More than 300 people die in these fires. An estimated 6,000 people receive hospital emergency room care for burn injuries associated with contacting hot surfaces of space heaters.

The following are some general suggestions by the CPSC for the selection, safe use, and maintenance of gas, wood, kerosene and electric space heaters:

- Select a space heater with a guard around the flame area or the heating element. This will help keep children, pets, and clothing away from the heat source.
- When selecting a heater, look for one that has been tested and certified by a nationally recognized testing laboratory. These heaters have been determined to meet specific safety standards, and manufacturers are required to provide important use and care information to the consumer.
- Buy a heater that is the correct size for the area you want to heat. The wrong size heater could produce more pollutants and may not be an efficient use of energy.
- Read and follow the manufacturer's operating instructions. Keep the owner's manual in a convenient place for reference when needed.
- Keep children and pets away from space heaters. Some heaters have very hot surfaces. Children should not be permitted to adjust the controls or move the heater.
- NEVER leave a space heater on when you leave the area. This would include lunch breaks or at the end of the day. A policy should be implemented to ensure all space heaters are unplugged when not in use.
- Never use or store flammable liquids around a space heater. The flammable vapors can flow from one part of the room to another and be ignited by the open flame or by an electrical spark.
- Space heaters should be placed at least 3 feet away from objects such as bedding, furniture, drapes, boxes, etc. Never use heaters to dry clothes or shoes. Do not place heaters where objects could fall on the heater and start a fire.
- Electric space heaters must be plugged directly into a properly grounded outlet. NEVER use an extension cord with a space heater.