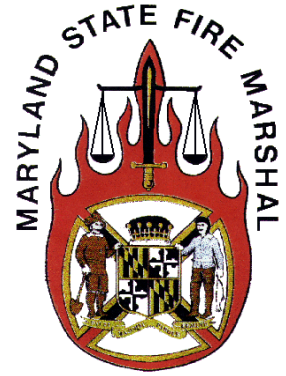


Maryland State Fire Marshal

News Release

Martin O'Malley
Governor

William E. Barnard
State Fire Marshal



PORTABLE SPACE HEATER SAFETY

“SAFETY TIPS TO LIVE BY”

PIKESVILLE, MD (October 13, 2010) – Fall temperatures are in the air and space heaters are arriving on a floor or table near you. State Fire Marshal William E. Barnard is reminding Marylanders of the risk associated with the use of portable space heaters. According to the National Fire Protection Association, in 2007, U.S. fire departments responded to 66,400 home fires that involved heating equipment. These fires directly resulted in 580 fire related deaths, 1,850 fire related injuries and an estimated \$608 million in direct property damage. *“The risk of fire from portable space heaters is especially high when used improperly,”* according to the Fire Marshal. *“The safety tips listed below will help all Marylanders reduce the chance for injury or death when using portable space heaters.”*

- Check labeling on packages containing space heaters to ensure they have been tested by an approved testing laboratory such as; Underwriters Laboratory (UL) before making a purchase.
- Read and follow manufacturers operating instructions and keep the owner’s manual available for reference.
- When using unvented fuel fired heaters make sure to only use the type of fuel specified in the owner’s manual and never use gasoline. Note: **Portable kerosene heaters are banned for use in Baltimore City.**
- Make sure when using unvented fuel fired space heaters that an adequate supply of fresh air is provided. These types of heaters produce Carbon Monoxide, which is an odorless, colorless and very poisonous gas. The use of Carbon Monoxide Alarms is highly recommended.
- Keep all portable space heaters at least three feet away from combustible items such as: newspapers, clothing, furniture, curtains, etc.
- Ensure children and pets are not able to make contact with a space heater.
- Never use an extension cord to operate a space heater. Electrical current used for space heaters can cause extension cords to overheat and potentially cause a fire.

The State fire Marshal offers another important piece of life safety advice. *“Make sure to test the smoke alarms in your home! Smoke alarms are one of the most effective life safety tools in preventing injury or death from fire.”*

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