

## GUIDELINES FOR STAFF

The use of portable outdoor heaters with LP Gas cylinders is a convenient way to provide warmth to customers during the colder months of the year.

However, this convenience also brings risks to lives and property. You must be aware of dangers associated with LP Gas use, your responsibilities for ensuring a safe environment and the need for implementing safe work practices and guidelines.

This information sheet provides you with simple and effective guidelines, explaining how to make outdoor heaters safe and manage gas safety responsibly.

It won't take long to read over and could save yourself, a workmate or a customer from being involved in a serious incident in the future.

If you have any questions regarding anything you have read, speak to your supervisor, employer or call **WorkSafe on 1800 136 089**.



### MAKE GAS SAFETY PART OF YOUR ROUTINE

#### 1. Have a gas safety supervisor

Most hazards occur when LP Gas cylinders and portable gas outdoor heaters are not handled correctly. On every shift there should always be a supervisor responsible for the safe use and storage of any LP Gas and outdoor heaters. The supervisor should also ensure all staff have up-to-date training and awareness of safety guidelines.

#### 2. Follow the gas safety rules

If you are involved in setting up heaters or connecting and changing cylinders you should be familiar with this safety information. Always use this information to ensure that LP Gas safety is maintained.

You should be aware of the manufacturer's instructions on outdoor heater usage and the required clearances needed between outdoor heaters and other materials, how to check for gas connection leaks, how to handle LP Gas cylinders and how to store LP Gas cylinders.



### HEATER SAFETY RULES

#### 1. Never use an outdoor heater indoors

Outdoor heaters are not suitable for indoor use and should only be used in well-ventilated outdoor areas. Poisonous gas can be released from faulty outdoor heaters used inside buildings and can lead to serious injury or death.

#### 2. Keep outdoor heaters clear from awnings and combustible material

General clearances for patio heaters are 300mm to 500mm above and to the side of patio heaters and for radiant panel heaters 750mm to 1100mm depending on heat output. All awnings, partitions and other combustible movable panels must not breach the minimum required clearance in any position. Different outdoor heaters have different clearance requirements so read the manufacturer's instructions for specific requirements.

#### 3. Put outdoor heaters on stable ground

An outdoor heater should be put on stable and level ground and must be protected from damage or interference to avoid the heater being knocked over and hitting people or causing a fire.

#### 4. Provide enough clearance for people to move safely around portable heaters

Follow the general clearance guidelines of 300mm - 500mm for patio heaters or 750mm to 1100mm for radiant panel heaters when assessing walkway clearances for staff and customers. Use your commonsense and if it looks dangerous, move the heater to a safer location.

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### MAINTENANCE

- 1. Never use damaged or malfunctioning heaters, connection hoses or cylinders**  
Heaters which are burning yellow or producing soot require immediate attention. A damaged or malfunctioning heater, connection hose or cylinder must be removed from service immediately and marked 'do not use'.
- 2. Service your heater at least every 2 years**  
Heaters need to be serviced every 2 years and more frequently if recommended by the manufacturer. Your supervisor should keep a register of heater service dates to ensure that the appliances are being serviced on a regular basis.
- 3. Check gas connections from cylinder to outdoor heater for leaks**  
Every time a cylinder is changed check for leaks at the connections using the soapy water test. To do this spray the connections with a soapy water solution – if bubbles form there is a leak. If a connection is loose it should be tightened. If a connection or hose is faulty or damaged it should be discarded. If in doubt, turn off the gas, notify your supervisor, employer or contact a licensed gasfitter.
- 4. Look for the AGA badge of compliance**  
Check that the Australian Gas Association badge of compliance is attached to all outdoor heaters on the premises. If you cannot find the compliance badge contact your supervisor, employer or call the **Office of Gas Safety on 1800 069 588**.



### CORRECT STORAGE AND HANDLING OF LP GAS CYLINDERS

- 1. Keep all LP Gas cylinders in a secure well-ventilated outdoor location**  
All cylinders not in use must be kept in a secure outdoor location. This prevents the risk of LP Gas leaks which could lead to devastating explosions. If gas cylinders are being stored inside immediately notify your supervisor, employer, or contact **WorkSafe on 1800 136 089**.
- 2. Minimise quantities of stored gas**  
Keep the number of unused or empty cylinders on the premises to a minimum to reduce the potential for a hazard occurring.



### WHEREVER POSSIBLE USE FIXED GAS SUPPLY

It is strongly recommended that outdoor gas heaters be fixed, and fuelled from fixed piped gas supply, either natural gas or a remotely located LP Gas cylinder. Portable outdoor heaters should only be used temporarily or where fixed piping is not feasible. Using fixed piping avoids heaters being knocked over or damaged and removes the hazard of staff handling and storing LP Gas cylinders.



## IMPORTANT CONTACT DETAILS

**IN AN EMERGENCY, CALL 000**

If you need further information on being **gas safe** you can contact:



**WORKSAFE**  
**1800 136 089**  
www.worksafe.vic.gov.au



**METROPOLITAN FIRE BRIGADE**  
**9420 3866**  
www.mfbb.vic.gov.au



**RESTAURANT AND CATERING VICTORIA**  
**9654 5866**  
www.restaurantcatervic.asn.au



**OFFICE OF GAS SAFETY**  
**1800 069 588**  
www.ogs.vic.gov.au



**COUNTRY FIRE AUTHORITY**  
**9262 8444**  
www.cfa.vic.gov.au

