

### Safe space heaters?

Kerosene heating appliances can save money on central heating fuel bills, but the heaters should be considered as supplemental heat only and used according to specific manufacturer instructions.

The Better Business Bureau notes that kerosene heaters can pose fire and air pollution problems, but these risks are minimal when care is used during heater operation.

Most reported fires from the heating units were caused by carelessness: setting the heater too close to flammable materials; using the wrong fuel; refueling indoors while the heater was in operation. Air pollution tests show that improvements in kerosene heaters have reduced carbon monoxide levels to that of one cigarette inhaled by a smoker every 8 hours.

If you are now shopping for a kerosene heater, keep in mind that the supplemental heating units are to be used in conjunction with a central heating plant. Trying to heat an entire house with a kerosene heater will be a disappointment as well as a safety hazard. Most heaters are not capable of handling the heating load. However, you can buy "central" type kerosene heaters that have a heat output to meet whole house needs.

To avoid pollution, kerosene heaters for in-house use should be fueled with K-1 kerosene. It is low in sulfur. The other type-K-2 kerosene is higher in sulfur and will emit lots of pollution. K-2 usually clogs wicks in heaters causing operating trouble.

When you buy the heater, buy a brand-new container for the fuel. Mark it "kerosene." Don't use containers for kerosene that have been used for gasoline, turpentine, mineral spirits, alcohol. The residue in the used container may cause an explosion when you fuel the heater.

The fuel for the heater should be kept in a cool spot such as a garage or storage room and away from children. When you refuel the heater and fuel is cold, leave room in the heater tank for the fuel to expand. Also, advises the BBB, have plenty of ventilation in the room when you run the heater; never set the heater in a doorway or hallway, and turn off the heater when you retire for the night.

### Reducing your bill

Was your last electric bill outrageous? Many North Carolinians used large amounts of electricity to keep warm during the recent cold snap.

Many more are pouring money down the drain. A slow drip from a hot water faucet uses 40 KWH of electricity a month, say extension specialists at North Carolina State University.

If that doesn't sound like much it is enough electricity to run a microwave oven, garbage disposal, toaster oven, waffle iron and coffee maker for a month. It only costs pennies for the do-it-yourselfer to change a washer.

Frosted-over refrigerator freezers cost money, so defrost often.

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