



SYRACUSE FIRE DEPARTMENT

CITY OF SYRACUSE, MAYOR BEN WALSH

PORTABLE OUTDOOR GAS-FIRED HEATING APPLIANCES (PATIO HEATERS)

Purpose

The intent of this policy is to provide the minimum guidelines for the use of outdoor gas-fired heating appliances (patio heaters) and establishment of general safety requirements for the storage and use of such heaters.

Scope

This policy applies to the use of outdoor gas-fired heating appliances, also called patio heaters, being utilized in outdoor areas of restaurants, sidewalk cafes, hotel dining areas, outdoor smoking areas and retail sites. This policy does not apply to patio heaters being utilized at 1 and 2 family residences.

References

2020 Fire Code of New York State
Property Conservation Code of the City of Syracuse (PCCCS)

Propane Permit

A propane permit is required to operate all Portable Outdoor Gas-Fired Heating Appliances (patio heaters) in a commercial setting. One propane permit will cover up to 5 (five) Portable Outdoor Gas-Fired Heating Appliances (patio heaters) per address. If the number of appliances operated at the address exceeds 5 (five), an additional propane permit will be required.

Propane permit applications should be completed online at the City of Syracuse's [Online Permit Portal](#) or at <https://www.syr.gov/Departments/Central-Permit-Office>.

- Propane permits for Portable Outdoor Gas-Fired Heating Appliances are valid from October 15 until March 31.
- Propane Placards must be posted in a conspicuous place and provided upon request of the Syracuse Fire Department. Failure to post the Propane Permit Placard or produce placard upon request will result in the appliance(s) being shut down until the existence of a valid permit is verified.

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Chief of Fire

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- A minimum of one (1) portable fire extinguisher with a 4-ABC rating shall be available for immediate utilization. The extinguisher must be located in the vicinity of the appliance(s).

Prohibited Locations and Clearances

The approved appliance(s) may **not** be placed or located:

- Inside any occupancy when connected to the fuel gas container.
- Inside tents, under canopies or membrane structures.
- On exterior balconies.
- On any combustible surface (decks, porches, tables, etc.)
- Less than 5 feet from any building or per manufacturer's instructions, whichever is greater.
- Beneath or closer than 5 feet to combustible decorations, overhangs, awnings, sunshades, or similar combustible attachments to a building or per manufacturer's instructions, whichever is greater.
- Within 5 feet of exits or exit discharge or per manufacturer's instructions, whichever is greater.
- Less than 5 feet from a Fire Department Connection or fire hydrant.

Installation and Operation

- Only listed and approved portable outdoor gas fired heating appliance, utilizing a fuel gas container that is integral to the appliance, shall be used.
 - a. **Natural gas shall not be used as the fuel source**
 - b. **Outdoor electric heaters require pre-approval from a city Electrical Inspector**
- Appliances must be installed and maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
- **Patio heaters shall be equipped with a tilt or tip over switch that automatically shuts off the flow of gas if the appliance is tilted more than 15 degrees.**

- **Check the manufacturers' instructions to determine if your patio heater is equipped with this feature! Patio heaters not equipped with an automatic tip over switch will not be permitted.**
- The heating element or combustion chamber of the unit must be permanently guarded to prevent accidental contact by persons or materials.

Fuel gas containers and Refill Operations

- Only approved fuel gas containers shall be used.
- The maximum individual capacity of any gas container used in connection with the appliance shall not exceed 20 pounds.
- Indoor storage of gas containers is prohibited.
- Replacement of fuel gas containers shall not be conducted while the public is present. The appliance being serviced must be moved to a nonpublic area or the area in which it is being used must be cleared of patrons while the container exchange is in progress.

Extinguishment Authority

Where a gas-fired heating appliance (patio heater) creates or adds to a hazardous situation, causes property damage, personal injury, is deemed a nuisance or a required permit for the appliance has not been obtained, the Chief of Fire, or his designee is authorized to order the operation of said appliance to cease until such condition has been rectified.

If you have any questions regarding this or any other fire safety concerns, contact the Syracuse Fire Department – Fire Prevention Bureau at 315-448-4777 or FirePrevention@syrgov.net

Syracuse Fire Department
Fire Prevention Bureau
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