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Portable Electric Space Heaters

Portable electric heaters manufactured after 1991 include many new performance requirements to enhance safety. For portable electric heaters that may present a fire hazard when tipped over, a tip-over switch will turn the heater off until it is turned upright again. New heaters also include indicator lights to let users know that the heater is plugged in or is turned on. Some manufacturers have included technically innovative safety controls such as infrared or proximity sensors, which can turn a heater off when objects come too close, or when children or pets are near. These kinds of controls may prevent burn injuries to children who might play too near a heater, or reduce the risk of ignition of combustible materials that could contact the heater.

- Use heaters on the floor. Never place heaters on furniture, since they may fall, dislodging or breaking parts in the heater, which could result in a fire or shock hazard.
- Unless certified for that purpose, do not use heaters in wet or moist places, such as bathrooms; corrosion or other damage to parts in the heater may lead to a fire or shock hazard.
- Do not hide cords under rugs or carpets. Placing anything on top of the cord could cause the cord to overheat, and can cause a fire.
- **Do not use an extension cord!**
- Be sure the plug fits snugly in the outlet. Since a loose plug can overheat, have a qualified repairman replace the worn-out plug or outlet. Since heaters draw lots of power, the cord and plug may feel warm. If the plug feels hot, unplug the heater and have a qualified repairman check for problems. If the heater and its plug are found to be working properly, have the outlet replaced. Using a heater with a hot cord or plug could start a fire.
- If a heater is used on an outlet protected by a ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) and the GFCI trips, do not assume the GFCI is broken. Because GFCIs protect the location where leakage currents can cause a severe shock, stop using the heater and have it checked, even if it seems to be working properly.
- Broken heaters should be checked and repaired by a qualified appliance service center. Do not attempt to repair, adjust or replace parts in the heater yourself.
- Keep at least one dry-powder operative, ABC type fire extinguisher in the home at all times.
- Keep areas around heat sources free of papers and trash.
- Store paints, solvents and flammable liquids away from all heat and ignition sources.