

Patio Heater Protection

Guidelines for the safe and responsible use of patio heaters

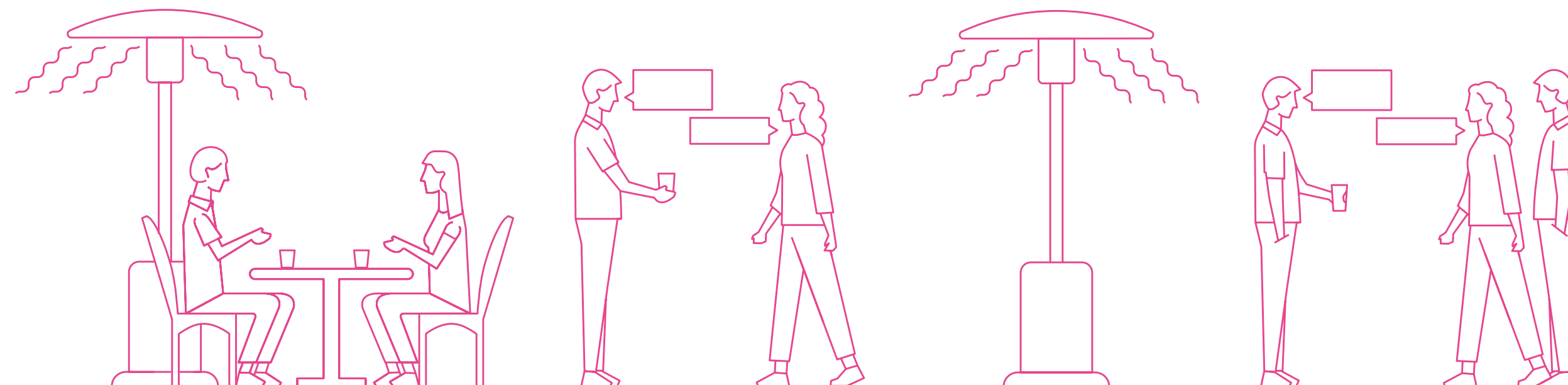
Outdoor patio heaters have become increasingly popular with pubs, cafes, restaurants, and hotels utilising their outdoor space. While these portable heating units provide warmth and comfort while socialising al fresco, they don't come without their risks. They can pose a danger to property and people if they are not installed, operated, and maintained correctly. You can ensure they are used safely by following these guidelines.



Do's

- Consider an alternative means of providing customer comfort, such as provision of blankets
- Select heaters which are CE marked and have inbuilt safety features that help prevent overbalancing, gas leaks, fires, and burns
- Service heaters regularly using a qualified technician, in line with the instructions provided by the manufacturer
- Only use infrared heaters that are adequately separated from the canopy material (minimum 1 metre), are fitted with heat shields that prevent heat exposure to materials above the heater, and ensure there is no way for the canopy or awning to fall onto the heater
- Heaters should only be used on terraces, balconies and under awnings where the manufacturers recommendations permit it, and a clear space free of combustible fixtures, fittings, or decorative items of at least 2 metres is provided
- Locate heaters at least 2 metres from any combustible construction materials, such as wooden decking or cladding
- Prohibit smoking around gas heaters and stored gas cylinders
- Ensure heaters are always placed on a stable surface, away from any fire hazards, building openings or mechanical air intakes, and in areas that are shielded from the wind
- Temporarily anchor, fix, or weight down heaters and ensure they are not in areas impacted by heavy footfall where there is a risk of people accidentally knocking them over. A temporary anchor will also prevent unauthorised people being tempted to move them

- Ensure all staff are adequately trained in the use of heaters, so they are aware of any signs of fault on the equipment or gas leak, and know what action to take should this happen
- Ensure sufficient, easily accessible fire extinguishers are in the area and that staff are trained in how to use them
- New or replacement cylinders must be as specified by the manufacturer. Staff who are expected to change cylinders should be suitably trained/competent to do so
- Complete regular checks on both the fittings, and the condition of the hose - the hose connecting the cylinder to the equipment on LPG appliances is a regular source of failure. Any new or replacement hoses should comply with BS 3212
- Store gas cylinders upright and protect them against tampering, unauthorised movement, dropping or impact that could result in a leak or fire
- Ensure their use and storage is considered in any general or fire risk assessments, and that you have also considered the implications of The Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations 2002 (DSEAR)
- Ensure people are seated or stood at a sufficient distance from the unit to prevent the risk of burns



Don'ts

- Do not use heaters in enclosed spaces such as inside a tent, marquee or directly under a parasol or umbrella as this could pose a risk to carbon-monoxide poisoning
- Do not place heaters on grass, an uneven surface, or near the edge of an elevated platform
- Never leave heaters unattended
- Do not use aerosols or flammable cleaning fluids within close proximity of the heater
- Never move the patio heater while the flame is open, ensure the fuel supply is properly shut off and the unit is cool before relocating
- Do not store gas cylinders inside the building when not in use
- Do not use if high winds are expected as this could result in the unit toppling over

For more risk management advice from RSA, visit:

[RSA Risk Consulting](#)

