

Provision of heating appliances in the hospitality sector

If you wish to provide heating in the temporary structure or outdoor area of your premises, then you must fully consider all the health and safety implications.

The first thing you must do is carry out a risk assessment. The HSE has extensive guidance and advice to assist you with this and other considerations for providing a safe workplace, which is available [here](#). You should also speak to your insurance company for any specifics they may require you to assess.

Heating appliances must conform to the relevant national standards and consideration needs to be given to ensure that the type of appliance chosen is suited to the venue.

Location:

- Where possible you must provide permanently fixed radiant heaters positioned so that they cannot be tampered with or pose a danger to those within the area.
- Heating appliances should be sited and used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. They should not be located directly underneath or in close proximity to awnings, canopies, or any combustible materials, including trees and bushes.
- Heating appliances should not be sited on escape routes, confined spaces, passageways or thoroughfares.
- Heating appliances should also be shielded from strong draughts or gusts of wind and sources of water.
- Free standing heating appliances should be sited on level ground for stability and be able to stand approximately upright. It may also be necessary to fix the appliances into position, so as to prevent them from being knocked over.
- Liquid or LPG fuelled appliances should only be used in well ventilated areas to avoid a depletion of oxygen levels and prevent the accumulation of harmful fumes such as Carbon Monoxide.
- In certain circumstances (such as marquees), heating appliances may be sited externally, and warm air piped into the structure via flame retardant hosing. However, it must be ensured that exhaust fumes are safely dispersed and prevented from entering the structure.
- Fire exits should be signed as such and kept free of obstruction at all times.

Electrical heating appliances:

- Prior to each use, the heating appliance and electrical socket outlet should be visually inspected for signs of damage or overheating. If damage is found, a competent person should be consulted.
- Heating appliances must be inspected periodically by a competent person and suitable records should be kept. The periods between inspections should be determined on a risk assessed basis and in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
- Wherever possible, an electric heating appliance incorporating a thermostat should be used.

- Care should be taken to ensure that appliances are switched off and remain safe at the end of each period of work.
- Heating appliances should be plugged directly into an electrical socket where possible; the use of extension leads and block adaptors should be avoided, and cables should not be subject to tension.
- Trailing leads are to be avoided or minimised, so as to reduce the likelihood of trips and falls. Where it is necessary for electrical cables to run across the floor, they should be routed away from walkways and thoroughfares and appropriately covered / protected.

LPG/Gas heating appliances:

- Gas appliances can be easily tampered with and pose an additional fire hazard. Therefore, the use of such appliances should be carefully considered and assessed fully in your risk assessment.
- It is a legal requirement to have any gas appliance, installation pipework or flue inspected at regular intervals not exceeding 12 months. This must be carried out by a GasSafe registered engineer; further information can be found [here](#) .
- Portable gas appliances should also be serviced and maintained regularly in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. In addition, they should be visually examined by a competent person periodically, including at each time that the gas cylinder is changed.
- Due to the potential hazard that they present, only an authorised, competent person should carry out fuelling, lighting and extinguishing an LPG heating appliance in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
- The fuel used should be in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
- Any gas supply to heating appliances should be switched off when not in use.
- If a gas leak is suspected, the supply should be switched off, all ignition sources in the vicinity eliminated and the appliance not used until assessed by a competent person.
- Stocks of LPG and nominally empty cylinders should be kept to a minimum. Spare gas cylinders should be stored securely and safely and well away from the building if possible. These should not be stored in the immediate vicinity of electric meters or other sources of ignition. Further information regarding the storage of gas cylinders can be found [here](#) .

Other heating appliances:

- Liquid fuelled appliances, such as paraffin heaters, are now rarely encountered and should not be used.
- Patio heating appliances are normally prescribed as unsuitable for use in covered areas. Please check the manufacturer's instructions for guidance on this matter before proceeding.

Further considerations:

- All furnishings, drapes, and furniture need to meet the fire standards and be flame retardant or treated.

- Keep in mind that dark objects absorb more heat than light objects and the raised temperature of the object can pose a health and safety hazard.
- Care must be taken during windy weather conditions, as there is a risk of the appliance being blown over. Furthermore, if the appliance has a flame, this will need to be monitored and the appliance switched off if abnormal burning is witnessed, or the flame extinguishes.
- Portable heating appliances should be allowed to cool fully before returning to storage.
- Where heaters are an integral fitting, e.g. beneath large parasols, they should be turned off and allowed to cool before the parasol is closed.
- Care must be taken at Christmas and times of other festivals to ensure that a space of at least twice the height of a heating appliance remains free between the appliance itself and any combustible decorations, especially Christmas trees.

Contact Us:

Should you require more information or advice on the contents of this guide, please contact the Aberdeen City Council Commercial Team on 03000 200 292 or email commercial@aberdeencity.gov.uk