



Heating for Outdoor Business Operations During COVID Restrictions

State and County health orders and guidelines intended to slow the spread of COVID-19 remain in place as the fall and winter months arrive. Moving dining and other business operations and functions outdoors was and remains an option for businesses to stay open and serve customers. Shade structures were approved for outdoor business operations as a way to protect customers from the sun and summer heat. Now the conversation has moved on to heating equipment as the weather cools.

As allowed by the California Fire Code and the California State Fire Marshal, local fire agencies can approve portable, temporary outdoor heating equipment when such devices can be used safely. In order to provide Rancho Cucamonga businesses the ability to provide a comfortable atmosphere for customers in cooler weather, the Fire District has approved the use of certain heating devices where they can be safely accommodated.

In order to be considered for approval, heating devices that use propane are required to be similar to those shown below where the heat or flame is enclosed and substantially above the ground. The devices are required to be sturdy and suitable for commercial use. The top of the device is required to be a minimum of 5 feet from all combustible materials and more than 5 feet from combustible materials when required by the manufacturer. **Propane storage is required to comply with the Fire Code. Consult with the Fire Inspector for acceptable options.**

Examples of Heating Devices that are Allowed with Proper Clearances



Propane fueled heating devices that are not allowed are those that are closer to the ground and more likely to cause burn injuries or devices that could be bumped and easily knocked over. Such prohibited devices include those shown on the reverse side.

Examples of Heating Devices that are Not Allowed



Heating equipment that utilizes electricity generally draws a significant amount of power. All exterior power sources, whether heating equipment, lighting fixtures, or any other electrical connections must be protected by a Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter (GFCI) that will stop the flow of current when a short circuit occurs. When water or moisture are present, the opportunity for a short circuit increases dramatically and could put people and other equipment in danger of electrical shock. A GFCI distribution box or cord, such as those shown below, are examples of the electrical protection that will be required for electric heating equipment.



Before being put into use, all propane fueled outdoor heating equipment is required to be approved by the Fire District and all electrical equipment is required to be approved by the Building Department. It is very important that all heating equipment is installed, located, and used correctly to avoid fires and injuries. Failure to obtain required approvals could result in citations and fines.

For approvals, contact the Fire District's Prevention Bureau at 909-477-2770 or RCFire@CityofRC.us. Contact the Building Department at 909-477-2710 or Building.Safety@CityofRC.us

As the weather cools and there is less need for overhead shade to block the hot summer sun, consider removing the tents and canopies that were installed earlier in the year. This will eliminate the overhead combustible materials and could provide more flexibility with providing heat for the outdoor business areas.

The objective is to provide safe heating options to accommodate customers while preventing fires and burn injuries. All of us working together cooperatively can achieve that outcome.

