

Are Portable Space Heaters Efficient for My Home?

TIPS FOR SAFE SELECTION AND USE OF ELECTRIC SPACE HEATERS

- 1 Use only portable space heaters that have an automatic "tip-switch," which will cause it to turn off automatically if the heater is tipped over or not upright.
- 2 Make sure it has a guard around the flame area or heating element.
- 3 Place the heater on a level, hard, nonflammable surface; do not place on rugs or carpets, near bedding or drapes, or on tables or countertops.
- 4 Keep the heater at least 3 feet from bedding, drapes, furniture or other flammable items.
- 5 Turn the space heater off if you leave the room, and never leave a space heater on while sleeping or if you leave home.
- 6 Keep children and pets away from space heaters.

Small space heaters, as their name says: heat a small space. But **many people use portable space heaters to heat their entire home, which can take a toll on your energy bills.** The truth is, whether you should use space heaters depends on your home's efficiency and energy needs.

Suppose you're using a space heater to compensate for problems in your home, like inadequate insulation, drafty windows, and exterior doors, or an inefficient heating system. In that case, space heaters are not a practical solution. **Your best bet is to improve the overall efficiency of your home.** If you're on a tight budget, caulking and weather stripping around windows and exterior doors is a low-cost, easy way to save energy. Depending on the size of your home, adding insulation can be a great next step. Loose-fill insulation typically costs \$1 to \$1.50 per square foot. Taking these proactive energy-saving measures rather than relying on space heaters for supplemental warmth can

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SUDS and SAVINGS

5 Energy-Saving Tips for the Laundry Room



Wash with cold water. Try a cold-water detergent for a brilliant clean!



Wash full loads when possible.



Dry heavier cottons separately.



Use wool or rubber dryer balls to keep clothes separated for faster drying.



Clean the lint filter after each drying cycle.



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reduce your heating and cooling bills for years to come.

Perhaps your home is energy efficient, but you're cold-natured and want a specific room to be cozier than the rest. In this case, a space heater may work for your needs. A good comparison is ceiling fans; we use ceiling fans in the summer to cool people, not rooms. A space heater can be used similarly during the winter months. **Only use a space heater in small spaces that you're occupying** and, if possible, try to shut off other rooms to contain the warmth provided by the space heater. If you decide to use a space heater to heat a small area in your home, make sure the heater is properly sized for the space; most heaters include a general sizing table.

A word about safety: the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission estimates more than 25,000 residential fires are associated with the use of space heaters every year, resulting in more than 300 deaths. **If you must use a space heater, purchase a newer model that includes the most current safety features** and make sure it carries the Underwriter's Laboratory (UL) label. All space heaters use 1500 watts of electricity. **It doesn't matter the size of the space heater; they all use the same power.** But the larger the space heater, the larger the blower fan is, which means more heat displacement compared to the smaller ones. **Choose a thermostatically controlled heater** to avoid energy waste and overheating, and **place the heater on a level surface** away from foot traffic when in use. **Always keep children and pets away from space heaters.**

Consider alternative ways to stay warm, like extra layers of clothing or UL-approved electric blankets. If you have hardwood or tile floors, lay down area rugs to provide additional insulation (and appeal!) and maintain warmth. We know it's cold out there, but remember that **space heaters can significantly increase your energy bills if misused, in addition to safety concerns.**

If you're looking for alternative ways to save energy and increase comfort in your home, contact us at **765.342.3344** and ask to be connected with an energy advisor. Visit **[sciremc.com/energy-advisor](https://www.sciremc.com/energy-advisor)** for more information. We're here to help you manage your energy use.