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Safe Use of Mobile Heaters

Introduction
This CGS provides guidance on the safe use of mobile heaters.

Background
A mobile gas heater is a portable indoor heater powered by butane gas bottles ONLY. These heaters are a safe economical source of winter warmth if looked after, properly serviced and used in accordance with manufacturer's instructions. They should comply with the requirements of BS EN 449 "Specification for dedicated liquefied petroleum gas appliances. Domestic flueless space heaters (including diffusive catalytic combustion heaters)" and carry a CE or UKCA certification mark.

N.B. Appliances prior to 1992 complied with the requirements of BS 5258 Parts 10 & 11 and carried the BSI Kite Mark. These old appliances should be replaced with newer ones that were manufactured after 1992.

When used in accordance with manufacturing instructions they are a safe and reliable appliance to use indoors. However, when used incorrectly they can result in fires and carbon monoxide poisoning.

General Note
Keep the heater clean and in good working order. When not in use, store in a safe, dry, childproof location. A mobile heater is not intended for use by people (including children) with reduced physical, sensory or mental capabilities or lack of experience and knowledge, unless they have been given supervision or instruction concerning the use of the appliance by a person responsible for their safety.

Mobile heaters should NOT be used where:

- Flammable liquids, vapours and aerosols are commonly used – such as hairdressers, garages and spray paint shop booths;
- Combustible materials within close proximity are located – bedrooms, airing and linen rooms including packing workshops and combustible storage;
- where free air ventilation is determined by the manufacture based on existing fixed appliances in pre-designed and constructed living and leisure accommodation, vehicles and motorcaravans.

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Mobile heaters used in Schools and Hospital
The location of mobile heaters in laboratories, art rooms or workrooms where highly flammable materials may be used requires special consideration. If a safe location cannot be found a mobile heater should not be used. It is essential that adequate ventilation is provided and maintained in rooms where heaters are used.

Gas Leak
If you can smell gas DO NOT turn the heater on until the leak has been detected. Ensure there are no naked flames or ignition sources present and DO NOT switch any electrical equipment or switches on or off. Open windows and doors to increase ventilation. If a leak is found, turn the tap off and DO NOT use the heater until it has been inspected and repaired by a competent gas engineer.

Ventilation
Mobile heaters, in the same way as any process of combustion, produce carbon dioxide and some water vapour during the normal course of operation. In a well-ventilated room, there is generally no problem with condensation.

Therefore ensure:
- The room in which the mobile heater is being used must be well ventilated; this is to ensure that the mobile heater is receiving an adequate supply of fresh air;
- If room has ventilators and grilles, they are not blocked;
- That fresh air enters from the doors and windows.

If the heater is in a room with inadequate ventilation, moisture will be unable to escape and may therefore produce 'condensation' on cold damp surfaces. From experience, if a room does not have a previous history of dampness, is reasonably well insulated, and has normal adequate ventilation, then the use of a mobile gas heater does not cause any unusual condensation problems.

Carbon Monoxide

Carbon Monoxide (CO) is a poisonous gas which can be formed by burning any carbon based fuel if the appliance is not properly installed or maintained. Carbon monoxide detectors are widely available. It is strongly recommended that every property has one. Such alarms should comply with BS EN 50291 and carry the appropriate conformity marking. CO alarms should be installed, checked and serviced in accordance with manufacturer's instructions. If you suffer from any of following symptoms when appliances are in use such as headaches; nausea and dizziness, you should turn the appliance(s) off immediately and have them checked by a competent person. This should be a Gas Safe Registered installer for appliances and fixed installations in domestic and commercial premises. If you have any safety concerns or questions, please contact your gas supplier.

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If the heater is showing any signs of the following it could be producing Carbon Monoxide:

- Ceramic burner panels are dull;
- gas burns with a blue haze;
- soot deposits on the burner panels;
- burner panels or cement fixings are damaged;
- heater does not burn quietly.

If there are any of these signs and/or any of the symptoms present, switch the heater off and have it checked by a competent person.

Servicing and Maintenance

Like all LPG appliances, mobile heaters (whether used in domestic or commercial premises) should be serviced annually to the manufacturer's instructions and by a competent person holding an **ACS CABLP1.**

Use only marked and certified hoses BS EN 16436-1 Class 2/3 which bear the year and name of the manufacturer as LPG attacks and erodes natural rubber. Keep hose lengths as short as possible and all flexible hoses must be secured with proper hose clips (see Liquid Gas UK Consumer Guidance Sheet No.17: 'Use of Clips to Secure Vapour Phase LPG Hose and Tubing to BS EN 16436-1 (Classes 1, 2 and 3) to End Fitting'). Make sure that the hoses are kept clear of 'hot spots' and inspect them from time to time. Replace any hose that shows signs of stiffness, wear, cracking, soft spots or other damage. BS: EN 16436-1 Class 2 hose has superseded those marked to BS:3212 Type 2. It is recommended that rubber hoses should be replaced after 5 years' service life. Hoses fitted to cabinet heaters must be marked BS: EN 16436-1 Class 2 (medium pressure up to 10bar) and be of 8mm inside diameter.

A suitable 28-30mbar rated Butane regulator must be included in the connection between the cylinder and the appliance. The regulator is precisely set to control the pressure of the supply and Must Not Be Adjusted. Replace any regulator, which is not working properly, or after 10 years of life. Regulators must be marked and certified to BS EN 16129. This Standard has superseded regulators previously marked to BS:3016 or BS EN 12864. (N.B. Any regulator marked BS 3016 will be over 10 years old so should be replaced).

Do:

- Use mobile heater with Butane gas ONLY;
- Use only in a well-ventilated area. A ventilation opening should run to the outside of the premises where the heater is to be operated;
- Ensure that nothing stands or passes in front of the heater;
- Use additional guards where necessary, to provide additional protection, especially if children or animals are present;
- Position the heater so that it is facing towards the middle of a room and away from furnishings, furniture, fabrics and walls etc;
- Use the supplied pressure regulator only;
- Store Butane gas cylinders in accordance with Liquid Gas UK CGS028;
- Ensure that the heater is correctly turned off when not in use;

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- Replace or repair damaged parts. Use genuine parts only. Unauthorised parts may be dangerous and will invalidate the warranty;
- Service your heater annually by using a competent gas engineer;
- Turn the container's gas valve off immediately, if the smell of gas is detected, or a leak suspected;
- Supervise children to ensure that they do not play with the appliance.

DO NOT

- Use Propane gas with a indoor cabinet heater;
- Use the heater if damaged;
- Use a naked flame to try and ignite the heater, or change the gas cylinder whilst using a naked light;
- Use multiple portable heaters in a room;
- Place the heater in a corridor or where it is likely to be exposed to strong draughts;
- Attempt to move the heater whilst it is working, or until it has cooled down;
- Leave the heater unattended at any time whilst in use;
- Allow children to operate or to play in the area around the heater;
- Stand too close to the heater as the high temperature could burn or ignite clothing;
- Remove the front grille from the heater, it is there to protect from the risk of fire, or injury from burns;
- Cover or place items to dry over the heater, even after it has been turned off, as it will remain hot for some time afterwards;
- Use in leisure vehicles such as caravans or motorhomes;
- Use in high rise flats;
- Use in wet or damp areas, such as bathrooms etc;
- Use in basements or below ground level;
- Twist the flexible gas supply hose;
- Use the heater where there is flammable material present – either liquids, solids or gases (e.g. – garages where petrol vapour may be present, workshops etc. where highly flammable material may be present).

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