
TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM

NO. 64

LPG PATIO HEATERS

SAFE USE

Outdoor radiant patio heaters using an LPG cylinder are becoming popular, both for commercial and domestic use. This Technical Memorandum sets out some basic safety rules which should be observed by users.

- Patio heaters are for outdoor use only. The combustion products leaving the heater are very hot. On no account should they be used in an enclosed space, or inside a tent or marquee or close to umbrellas.
- They may be used under awnings only if the manufacturers instructions permit it. Awnings should not impede the escape of combustion products.
- Care is needed when positioning a heater near terraces or balconies to ensure the products of combustion do not adversely affect people or property at burner level.
- Heaters should not be moved when alight.
- Heaters should be positioned in areas shielded from the wind.
- If a free standing heater appears unstable in a high wind, the gas should be turned off at the cylinder valve, the cylinder should be disconnected and removed and the heater moved to a position out of the wind.
- Assembly of heaters should be carried out by a competent person in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and the assembly should then be tested before use to ensure it is gas-tight and operates correctly.
- The LPG cylinder to be used should be of the correct type for the heater, i.e. either propane or butane and size as specified in the manufacturer's instructions.
- The gas pressure and type should be specified in the manufacturer's instructions (normally 28 mbar butane or 37 mbar propane). An appropriate regulator must be fitted using hose to BS3212/2 and suitable clips. Your local LPG dealer will be able to give advice.
- Heaters should be regularly serviced by a competent person in accordance with the manufacturers instructions, particularly prior to the start of a new season.

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- ***It is a legal requirement for heaters supplied by landlords for use at their premises to have heaters checked for safety at intervals not exceeding 12 months and this must be carried out by a CORGI registered installer under the Gas safety (Installation and Use) Regulations.***

The term 'Landlord' is widely defined. If in doubt refer to the Regulations, or the Guidance both of which are available from HSE Books.

- The condition of the flexible hose connecting the regulator to heater inlet should be checked each time the cylinder is replaced. If it shows signs of cracking, splitting or other deterioration, it should be exchanged for new hose manufactured to BS 3212 type 2.
- LPG is odourised to enable accidental releases to be detected by smell. If a persistent gas smell is present, the heater should not be used, or if alight, the gas supply should be turned off at the cylinder valve. The cause should be investigated and rectified before the heater is again used.



Changing the Cylinder

- Always change cylinders in accordance with the gas supplier's instructions.
- Make sure the cylinder valve is shut before attempting to disconnect it and that there are no ignition sources nearby e.g. lit barbecues, candles, flame lamps, whilst the changeover takes place.
- Ensure the replacement cylinder is of the correct type. If it is a butane cylinder it will probably have a clip-on or snap-on valve which must be compatible with the regulator connector. If it is a propane cylinder remember the screw connection is LEFT-HAND. Undo it clockwise and use a correct spanner.
- Make sure that any hand valve on the replacement cylinder is closed (turned fully clockwise) before removing the plastic plug or cap.
- Test the joint with soap solution or a proprietary leak detection fluid and ensure the joint is leak-tight before lighting the heater.

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