Prevent outdoor heater-related accidents and injuries

As we settle into winter and restaurants continue to adjust to the new reality of outdoor dining post-COVID-19, Nationwide Insurance understands that you as a business owner want to make your customers feel as comfortable as possible during these uncomfortable times. Consider the information below to use outdoor heaters safely.

- Always place the heater on a flat, stable surface.
- Follow the manufacturer’s guidelines for safe use.
- Do not light or operate the heater if you smell gas.
- Outdoor heaters should never be used indoors.
- When outdoor heaters are placed inside tents, a carbon monoxide detector should be present.
- Heaters should be placed at least five feet away from exits and areas of high foot traffic.
- Heaters should be turned off and the gas disconnected prior to any movement of the heater.
- Keep heaters away from combustibles, in accordance with the manufacturer’s guidelines.

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Portable fire extinguishers should be positioned in high visibility locations in any areas where outdoor heaters are used so they will be readily accessible in the event of fire.

**Propane cylinder storage**
- Propane cylinders should never be stored inside.
- Store cylinders in a well-ventilated area.
- Cylinders should always be stored upright with the valve facing upward.
- Keep cylinders at least five feet away from any ignition source.
- Store cylinders in a secure area, away from where people congregate.

Due to the elevated risk of severe injury, the use of unprotected open flame heating sources, such as fire pits, is not recommended.