As winter and colder weather approach, the use of portable heaters increases. Electric or gas heaters are very handy to supplement insufficient heat in offices, homes, and other areas; however, they can create hazards if not used properly. Without careful monitoring, heaters can create an electric shock hazard, burns to users, carbon monoxide poisoning, fires, or possibly even explosions.

**Recent information from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security:**

* Approximately one-third of residential building portable heater fires occur in bedrooms; almost one quarter of these are started in bedding.
* Half of residential building portable heater fires result because the heat source is too close to combustible materials.
* More portable heater fires occur in residential buildings during the month of February than any other month.

**Heater selection:**

* When purchasing a portable heater (gas or electric) be sure that it is an approved model from a recognized testing laboratory, such as Underwriters’ Laboratories.
* Assure that it has a safety "automatic turn-off device" that will turn the heater off if it is accidently tipped over or if overheating occurs.

**Heater placement:**

* Choose a heater with a low center of gravity and place it on a level surface.
* Place the heater and electrical cord out of the main traffic area of a room so they do not become a trip hazard.
* Keep children and pets away from heaters to avoid burns.
* Don’t place in locations that are normal paths of travel.
* Maintain at least 36 inches between the heater and any flammable material including beds, clothing, furniture, curtains, or other flammable materials.
* Never drape or lay materials, such as wet clothing, over a space heater.

**Heater placement (cont.):**

* Never leave a portable heater unattended.
* Turn off and unplug heaters when leaving the area.
* Always turn portable heaters off when you go to sleep.

**Ventilation:**

* Provide proper ventilation:
* Follow all manufacturer warnings and instructions.
  + - Fuel-burning heaters require ventilation to prevent the buildup of flammable gases and vapors.
    - The accumulation of poisonous carbon monoxide is a concern with heaters that burn fuels.
* Make sure that smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms are installed in critical locations throughout the home or work area and test them periodically.

**Electrical safety:**

* Maintain and inspect the equipment to detect problems, like poor connections or electrical wire damage.
* Make sure that the circuits providing electricity to the heater are not overloaded.

**Never use a heater in the following places:**

* Where it can ignite combustible or flammable materials.
* Paper, wood debris, cardboard, and even frayed curtains or carpets can ignite if they are placed too close.
* In an area where there might be a possibility of an explosive atmosphere.
* In a wet environment or where moisture may be prevalent.
* For electric heaters, moisture or water presents an additional risk for electrical shock.

*Always follow the manufacturer’s instructions when operating a portable heater.*

This form documents that the training specified above was presented to the listed participants. By signing below, each participant acknowledges receiving this training.

Organization: Date:

Trainer: Trainer’s Signature:

**Class Participants:**

Name: Signature:

Name: Signature:

Name: Signature:

Name: Signature:

Name: Signature:

Name: Signature:

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