



MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™  
MS AGRICULTURAL AND FORESTRY  
EXPERIMENT STATION

# MAFES DAWG TRACKS

The weather is finally getting cold here and propane is a common fuel used for portable heaters. While a great option to warm up your chilly work area, shop, barn, or hunting house, be aware of precautions to stay both warm and safe.

## Know the difference between indoor-safe and outdoor only propane heaters:

- Outdoor use only heaters burn fuel at a higher rate, therefore increasing the risk for carbon monoxide poisoning. Never use them inside, even temporarily.
- Indoor safe heaters feature an oxygen depletion sensor (ODS) that will automatically shut the heater off if the available air flow is reduced below a safe level.

## Noted Safety Tips:

- ✓ Don't place a heater directly on a plywood floor -- position it instead on a 4-foot by 4-foot square of fire-resistant drywall or cement-board.
- ✓ Keep at least 3 feet of clearance from any object around heater. Heaters used in the vicinity of combustible tarpaulins, canvas, or similar coverings shall be located at least 10 feet from the coverings.
- ✓ Do not use heaters in a manner for which they were not intended (e.g., cooking or warming/drying clothing).
- ✓ No matter how cold, no fuel-burning appliance, including indoor-safe appliances, should be left unattended or operated while sleeping.

For more info contact:  
**Leslie Woolington**  
MAFES/MSU-ES Risk Mgmt.  
[LHW4@msstate.edu](mailto:LHW4@msstate.edu)  
662.325.3204

Propane heaters need oxygen to breath. If you have a propane heater in a small space, like a shooting house, camper or small room, and it's running on high, it is probably consuming some of the oxygen you need to breathe. Even with indoor-safe models, be sure to frequently open a door or window to let in fresh air. An airtight space could become a bad thing when using a propane heater.

Carbon Monoxide (CO) poisoning is a serious concern when using any fuel burning heaters. CO is produced from the incomplete gas combustion. Properly functioning heaters produce "ideal burns" and present no danger. However, a small malfunction over time from use or improper adjustment could result in an atmosphere for CO poisoning.

## Know the Signs and Symptoms of CO Poisoning:

- Dull headache
- Weakness
- Dizziness
- Nausea or vomiting
- Shortness of breath
- Confusion
- Blurred vision
- Loss of consciousness



## Sources:

<http://campsafe.org/2014/02/07/hello-world-2/>  
<https://www.cenex.com/about/cenex-information/cenexperts-blog-page/propane/propane-heater-safety>  
<https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/regulations/standardnumber/1926/1926.154>