



**CHARLOTTE FIRE DEPARTMENT  
FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE  
Fire Prevention Bureau**

Code/Procedural Interpretation

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**CFD Interpretation:** Use of Portable Outdoor Heaters

**Date:** June 5, 2014

**Code Reference:** North Carolina Fire Code, Section 603

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**Subject:**

Can I use portable propane fueled radiant heaters on my restaurant patio or outdoor seating area?

**Interpretation:**

Yes, but only under certain circumstances. The North Carolina Fire Code allows the use of portable gas-fired outdoor heaters **ONLY** under the following guidelines:

- Heaters cannot be used in any tent or under any canopy or membrane structure.
- A minimum clearance of 5-feet shall be maintained between the heater and the building, combustible decorative material, or exit or access thereto.
- Heaters shall not be located beneath any awning, sunshade or similar building attachments.
- Heater shall be UL Listed and installed and maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications.
- Heater shall be fitted with a tip-over switch that will automatically shut off the flow of gas if heater is tilted to more than 15 degrees to vertical.
- The heating element or combustion chamber shall be protected from physical contact.