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## **Fire Safety Notice: Portable Propane Patio Heaters in Commercial Occupancies.**

The Oak Island Fire Marshal's Office has identified several Fire Safety Hazards within the Town of Oak Island related to portable heating equipment. The primary concerns are with the new stand-up portable propane patio heaters and fuel-fired portable exterior fire pits being used to heat outdoor seating and assembly areas. While a seemingly good idea, these items are not permitted for use in commercial businesses and assembly areas.

### **Portable Unvented Heaters:**

*NC Fire Prevention Code, Section 603.4* – Portable unvented fuel-fired heating equipment shall be **prohibited** in Groups A, E, I, R-1, R-2, R-3, and R-4 Occupancies with the exception of listed and approved heaters in One and Two-Family dwellings.

These heaters are not intended for use in **any enclosed space** due to the potential for carbon monoxide exposure and danger of fire from tipping over or close proximity to flammable or combustible materials. In addition, the fuel source is stored in the base of the heaters and poses a significant fire and explosion hazard to occupants. Examples of these types of heaters are shown below:



### **Fuel-Fired Open Flame Fire Pits:**

Fuel-Fired Open Flame Fire Pits used for heating and comfort are **prohibited** for use in commercial occupancies and assembly areas. These items, when used with portable fuel tanks, are still portable fuel-fired heating equipment and prohibited from use due to the potential for carbon monoxide exposure and danger of fire, explosion and burns. In addition, most of these types of devices do not have adequate protection to prevent exposure to flammable and combustible materials and do not have safeguards in place to prevent accidental contact. An example of a prohibited outdoor fire pit is shown below:



**Note:** Not all heaters are prohibited for use in commercial occupancies, however, it is important to note that most changes or additions to commercial occupancies may either be prohibited or require a permit. We urge you to contact the Fire Marshal's Office at 910-278-1000 for further information or questions in order to be compliant with the NC Fire Code and avoid costly purchases.