

ASSESSING THE USE OF PORTABLE SPACE HEATERS FOR SUPERVISED INDEPENDENT LIVING PLACEMENTS (SILP)

This provides DCFS staff responsible for SILP inspections with practical guidance to achieve best practice when assessing and approving the use of portable space heaters in Supervised Independent Living Placements (SILPs). CDSS has indicated that SILPs where portable space heaters are present may be approved as long as the portable space heater is safe and appropriate and there are no other safety issues or concerns.

In assessing and approving SILPs with portable space heaters, staff shall use the [SOC 157B, SILP Inspection: Checklist Of Facility Health And Safety Standards](#) form along with the [DCFS 123-E, DCFS SILP Inspection: Portable Space Heater Safety Checklist](#) as guides to ensure adequate levels of required safety are being met in the placement. The below guidelines and relevant factors will be taken into consideration by DCFS for every SILP assessment where there is a portable space heater present:

The portable space heater must be used appropriately and the SILP will be assessed to determine the following.

- Does the heater have a protective barrier (a screen fully covering the heating element)?
- Is the heater hot to touch?
- Does the heater have an automatic shut off switch?
- Is there a functioning smoke detector in the home? If not, can one be provided?
- Is there a functioning carbon monoxide monitor? If not, can one be provided?
- Where is the heater kept while on and where is it stored?
- If there is/are a child/children in the home where the space heater is located, have safety precautions been discussed with the NMD?

In addition, under the SOC 157B, item 11, the following must be true:

- Home has a safe and functioning heat source that can be used to keep the home at a safe and comfortable temperature.
- The heating source can be a space heater if it has proper safety features: automatic shut-off if tipped over; screen fully covering the heating element; is used in a safe manner (nothing draped over it and/or sticking into it, etc. and can provide enough heat to maintain a comfortable temperature in the room.

In assessing the physical environment of the SILP, the portable space heater must be used in accordance to the guidelines from the manufacturer of that portable space heater. Staff completing the inspections will take pictures of the approved or not approved space heater and where it is located in the home at the time of their assessment. It is desirable that whether approving or denying a SILP based on a utilization of a space heater, that a photograph of the space heater be taken and stored on CWS/CMS.

Staff are referred to the following resources and information for additional guidance and to share with the NMDs as applicable:

<https://www.usfa.fema.gov/prevention/outreach/media/pictographs/heating.html>

https://www.usfa.fema.gov/downloads/pdf/publications/electrical_infographic.pdf