

Outdoor Dining Heating Systems



During the colder winter months, keeping customers comfortable while dining outdoors can become a challenge. To assist, the City's Open Restaurants Program for sidewalk and roadway dining allows eating and drinking establishments to install outdoor heating systems.

NYC allows restaurant owners to choose between three different types of outdoor heating systems for their outdoor dining setups:

1. **Electric Heaters**
2. **Natural Gas Heaters**
3. **Propane Heaters**

Each of these three types of heating systems has their own costs, benefits, and specific regulations that must be adhered to. Regardless of the heating system you choose, you are required to make sure that the heaters are properly installed and used safely. That means hiring licensed professionals to do the work, obtaining permits where necessary, and following the manufacturer's instructions when using the heaters. Failure to use a heater as the manufacturer intended can pose serious fire risks.

Electric Heating Systems

The simplified guide below is specifically intended for owners of Eating and Drinking Establishments looking for guidance on how to install electric heating systems for outdoor dining. [A more detailed guide is available on our website here.](#) Remember that in NYC, electrical heaters are allowed on the sidewalks and are also allowed in the roadways.

Step 1 Hire a Licensed Master Electrician

- This is the most important step, and it cannot be skipped. If you want to install an electrical heating system for outdoor dining, you **must** hire a Licensed Master Electrician.
- To install electric heaters for outdoor dining, work may be required on the building's existing electrical wiring system, and to install proper outdoor outlets. This work requires permits, which can be obtained by a Licensed Master Electrician. No electrical work can be performed without an approved electrical filing and a DOB work permit.



- A Licensed Master Electrician, who is in good standing with the Department of Buildings, will be knowledgeable of all relevant regulations, they will know how to get the proper permits, and they will be able to perform the electrical wiring work necessary for the new heating system.
- You can check on the licensing status of electricians in NYC by visiting the [Department's Buildings Information System \(BIS\) website](#).
- All electrical work in New York City must be performed by a Licensed Master Electrician. It is dangerous and illegal for an unqualified person to perform electrical work in New York City.

Step 2 Get Your Inspections

- Once your Licensed Master Electrician has obtained permits and performed the work to install your new electrical outdoor heating system, they can turn it on when they deem it safe and complete. While there is no need to wait for a DOB inspection to turn the system on, an inspection is still required and must be conducted.
- Please note that while some minor electrical work does not require DOB inspections, the installation of new wiring and outlets does. Also, if a new electrical panel is installed, an electrical rough inspection is required prior to energizing that panel. For all inspections required, your electrician can file an official inspection request with DOB. Once the request is made, DOB will route an inspector to the location to ensure everything is safe and up to code.

Step 3 Turn on your Heating System

- Now that the electrical heating system has been properly installed and inspected, your outdoor heating system can be turned on and operated by your restaurant staff.
- Remember to always follow the manufacturer's instructions when using the electrical heating system, including instructions on the placement of heaters and how to properly secure them.

Natural Gas Heating Systems

The below simplified guide is specifically intended for owners of Eating and Drinking Establishments looking for guidance on how to install natural gas heating systems for outdoor dining. [A more detailed guide is available on our website here](#). Remember that in NYC, natural gas heaters are allowed on the sidewalks only. You are not allowed to move them into the roadways.

Step 1 Hire a Licensed Master Plumber

- This is the most important step, and it cannot be skipped. If you want to install a natural gas heating system for outdoor dining, you **must** hire a Licensed Master Plumber.
- To install natural gas heaters for outdoor dining, work may be required on the building's existing natural gas piping system. This work requires permits, which can be obtained by a Licensed Master Plumber. No gas work can be performed without an approved LAA filing and a DOB work permit.
- A Licensed Master Plumber, who is in good standing with the Department of Buildings, will be knowledgeable of all relevant regulations, they will know how to get the proper permits, and they will be able to perform the gas plumbing work necessary for the new heating system.
- You can check on the licensing status of plumbers in NYC by visiting the [Department's Buildings Information System \(BIS\) website](#).
- All gas plumbing work in New York City must be performed by either the Licensed Master Plumber or a person with gas work qualifications. It is dangerous and illegal for an unqualified person to perform gas work in New York City.

Step 2 Get Your Inspections

- **DOB** - Once your Licensed Master Plumber has obtained permits and performed the work to install your new natural gas outdoor heating system, you will need to have the work inspected by DOB. Your plumber can file an official inspection request with DOB. Once the request is made, DOB will route an inspector to the location to ensure everything is safe and up to code.
- **FDNY** - After your DOB inspection, an additional FDNY inspection is needed to ensure the work also complies with the NYC Fire Code. Your Licensed Master Plumber can schedule this inspection with FDNY as well. FDNY permits and Certificates of Fitness must be obtained from FDNY in order to legally use your newly installed natural gas heating system.
- **Utility Company** - After all of your inspections are done, your Licensed Master Plumber can then call your local utility company, who will be able to turn on the gas service for your new natural gas heating system.

Step 3 Turn on your Heating System

- Now that the gas heating system has been properly installed, inspected, and gas service is turned on by the utility company, your outdoor heating system can be turned on and operated by your restaurant staff.
- Remember to always follow the manufacturer's instructions when using the natural gas heating system, including instructions on the placement of heaters and how to properly secure them.

Propane Heaters

Propane heaters are self-contained heating elements that rely on replaceable propane gas tanks inside of the heaters to provide heat.

These heaters do not require DOB permits or inspections, but they are subject to FDNY regulations.

Please visit the [FDNY website](#) for detailed information about using propane heaters for outdoor dining in NYC.

