



Outdoor Heaters for Outdoor Dining FAQ

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What options are available to restaurants who wish to provide heating for patrons dining outdoors?

Restaurants have 3 options:

1. Electrical heating—either portable units or wall/ceiling mounted units.
2. Natural gas-fired heaters—either portable or wall/ceiling mounted units.
3. Propane-fueled heaters – portable only.

Does my restaurant have to participate in the Open Restaurants Program in order to utilize one of the heating options?

No. As long as your restaurant has a private outdoor dining area such as a back yard, side yard, or parking lot, and you meet all the conditions required by the New York City Fire Department (FDNY) and/or Department of Buildings (DOB) for the particular heating option, you may utilize any of the 3 heating options.

Are there restrictions on the types of heaters that can be placed in street or roadway dining areas?

Yes. Only electric heaters may be placed on street and roadway dining areas as part of the Open Dining program.

Electric Heaters

I want to use electric heaters. What is the process for installing them?

There are 2 types of electric heaters: freestanding units and mounted units. Each type of unit has specific electrical wiring requirements which can be found on [DOB's website](#).

Are there any specific requirements for the use of electric heaters?

Yes. Please refer to the manufacturer's instructions.

Natural Gas Heaters

Are open-flamed natural gas heaters allowed?

No. The use of open-flamed natural gas heaters is prohibited.

I want to use natural gas heaters. What is the process for installing them?

Please refer to the [guidance](#) provided by the NYC Department of Buildings.

May I place natural gas heaters in the roadway or street?

No. Natural gas heaters are only allowed on sidewalk dining areas.

Do I have to notify my utility company about the installation of a natural gas heater?

Yes.

Propane Heaters**I want to use propane heaters—where am I allowed to place or store them?**

Propane heaters are authorized for use in outdoor dining areas, however, propane heaters **may not** be placed in streets and roadways, even if the roadway has been “closed” by the Open Streets/Open Restaurants program.

My restaurant has an outdoor dining area in the rear of a building. Can I use the typical 20-pound propane container for heating?

You may not use a 20-pound container if the only way to access the outdoor dining area is by entering and passing through the building. 20-pound containers are also prohibited on rooftops, balconies and terraces. In these locations, you can only use 1-pound propane containers.

Can I store propane containers in my restaurant’s basement?

No. Propane containers of any size cannot be stored below grade (such as in a cellar or basement) or on a rooftop. Additionally, storage of 20-pound propane containers (any container not connected to a heater) is prohibited unless you have been issued an FDNY permit for an approved facility for storage.

Additional Resources**Where can I find all the information I need to set up outdoor heating for my restaurant?****NYC Department of Buildings:**

- [BB19 Electric Heat](#)
- [BB20 Natural Gas Heat](#)

FDNY

- <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/fdny/business/support/restaurant-help.page>
- <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/fdny/downloads/pdf/business/guidance-comfort-heating-outdoor-dining.pdf>
- <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/fdny/downloads/pdf/business/attestation-propane-heaters.pdf>
- <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/fdny/downloads/pdf/business/attestation-fillable.pdf>
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