



Attention Homeowners

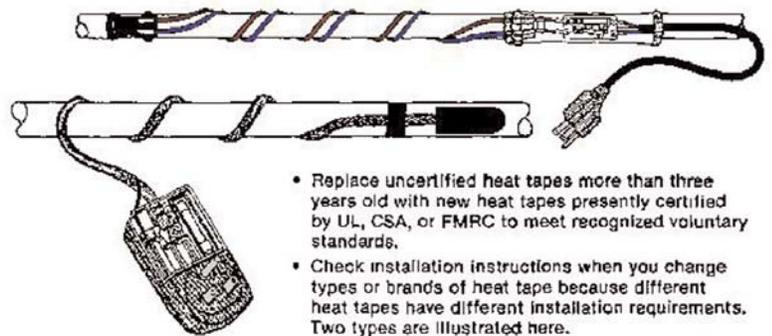
Have Heat Tapes, Cables Checked For Fire Hazards

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) urges homeowners and mobile home residents who use heat tapes or pipe heating cables to protect exposed water and drain pipes from freezing, to inspect the tapes or cables annually for possible fire hazards.

According to the CPSC, an estimated 3,300 residential fires involving heat tapes or cables occur each year. These fires result in 20 deaths, 150 injuries and \$27 million in property losses each year. In many cases, improperly installed tapes or heating cables cause the fires.

Annual inspections of heat tapes or pipe heating cables are necessary to detect any possible fire hazards. Unplug the heat tape or cable and then check the entire length or the tape or cable. The plastic insulation of the heat tape or heating cable should be checked carefully. If bare wires are exposed or any cracks, cuts, breaks or signs of charring or discoloration are found in the plastic insulation, the tape or cable should be replaced immediately.

Some heat tapes are plugged in year-round and are activated by a thermostat when the outdoor temperature approaches freezing. In other situations, homeowners plug in the tapes and unplug them in the spring.



- Replace uncertified heat tapes more than three years old with new heat tapes presently certified by UL, CSA, or FMRC to meet recognized voluntary standards.
- Check installation instructions when you change types or brands of heat tape because different heat tapes have different installation requirements. Two types are illustrated here.

CPSC offers the following additional safety tips for heat tapes or cables:

- Replace uncertified heat tapes more than 3 years old with new heat tapes certified to meet recognized voluntary standards. All new heat tapes have a 3-prong plug. Always plug the 3-prong plug into a 3-prong grounded outlet to make sure the heat tape is grounded. Plug heat tapes into an outlet protected by a ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI).
- Buy the proper tape/cable. Know the diameter and length of the pipe to be protected. Then buy the heat tape recommended for that size and length of pipe by the manufacturer.
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions for installing the tape or cable. Tape should not be lapped over itself around the pipe, unless this is specifically permitted in the manufacturer's instructions. Do not use heat tapes or heating cables for any use other than that recommended by the manufacturer.
- Heat tapes or cables should be wrapped directly over the pipe to be protected, never on top of thermal insulation covering a pipe.
- Don't cover heat tape/cable with insulating materials unless permitted by the manufacturer. If insulation is permitted, it must be a non-flammable insulating material such as fibrous glass. Never use more insulation than recommended by the manufacturer. Over-insulation can cause a fire. material such as fibrous glass.