

Frequently Asked Questions: “Vented Hearth Heater” Definition

DOE established a definition for a new category of residential direct heating equipment known as “Vented Hearth Heaters” in the final rule for Energy Conservation Standards for Residential Water Heaters, Direct Heating Equipment, and Pool Heaters issued by the Secretary of Energy on March 31, 2010. 75 FR 20112 (April 16, 2010). The final rule defines “Vented Hearth Heater” as follows:

“Vented hearth heater means a vented appliance which simulates a solid fuel fireplace and is designed to furnish warm air, with or without duct connections, to the space in which it is installed. The circulation of heated room air may be by gravity or mechanical means. A vented hearth heater may be freestanding, recessed, zero clearance, or a gas fireplace insert or stove. Those heaters with a maximum input capacity less than or equal to 9,000 British thermal units per hour (Btu/h), as measured using DOE’s test procedure for vented home heating equipment (10 CFR part 430, subpart B, appendix O), are considered purely decorative and are excluded from DOE’s regulations.” (10 CFR 430.2)

Question #1: What types of products does DOE’s “vented hearth heater” definition cover?

Answer: DOE’s definition covers vented gas hearth products that are intended to simulate a solid fuel fireplace and designed to heat the surrounding space in which they are installed. The definition applies only to gas fireplaces, gas fireplace inserts, and gas stoves with input ratings greater than 9,000 Btu/h as measured by DOE’s test procedure (10 CFR part 430, subpart B, appendix O).

Question #2: Does the definition of “vented hearth heater” cover vented gas log sets?

Answer: No. DOE believes that gas log sets have specific characteristics that differentiate them from gas fireplaces, gas fireplace inserts, and gas stoves. The primary differentiating feature of gas log sets is that they are not constructed as part of an entire enclosure (*i.e.*, there is no surrounding box or viewing pane) or a sealed system. DOE recognizes that by the nature of gas log set construction, they do not provide the same heating function as gas fireplaces, gas fireplace inserts, and gas stoves, which are constructed as enclosed systems, and, thus, DOE believes that gas log sets products are intended to be installed for decorative purposes. DOE’s definition states that a vented hearth heater may be “freestanding, recessed, zero clearance, or a gas fireplace insert or stove.” DOE does not believe that any of these terms include gas log sets, which DOE considers as different products from freestanding, recessed, and zero clearance gas fireplaces, gas fireplace inserts, and gas stoves. As a result, DOE interprets its definition of a “vented hearth heater” as not covering vented gas log sets.

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