



How to take a professional quality heater photo

1) Prepare the heater

- Return for the photo after the house is finished and furnished.
- Keep it simple. Focus is on the heater, with a few well placed accessories - a rug on the floor, a plant perhaps. Move things out of the way temporarily to avoid a cluttered look.

2) Photo equipment

- 35 mm single lens reflex camera
- wide angle lens - 28mm or wider
- 80B filter for lens, to correct for artificial light
- tripod
- cable release for shutter
- two 500 watt "Photoflood" bulbs, available at a camera store for about \$5.00 each
- 2 standard clip-on light holders with reflectors, available at hardware stores
- extension cords
- newspapers for creating a short fire in the heater
- Film: 24 exposure roll of 100 ASA Kodacolor (prints) and 24 exposure roll of 100 ASA Kodachrome (slides)

3) Camera setup

- Unless there is an obviously better angle, the most common view is directly from the front.
- Mount camera on tripod, set back as far as possible from heater. You can crop the picture later.
- Move the camera up and down on the tripod to find the most suitable height. 36" is a good starting point.
- Take your time setting up the camera and study the scene through the viewfinder.
- Most important part: set camera perfectly level and horizontal, to ensure parallel vertical lines in the photo. If camera is not perfectly horizontal, vertical lines will converge and give you an unprofessional photo. You can confirm that the camera is horizontal by looking through the viewfinder and noting that vertical lines are parallel to both edges of the viewfinder window.
- Once you have the scene set up, install the 80B filter on the lens.

4) Lighting

- Use mostly natural light. Avoid strong contrasts from sunlight. If sunlight is coming through a window and creating bright spots, hang a sheet or towel over the window to diffuse the light.
- Avoid dark corners in the room - turn on interior lights as needed. Don't have a bright light bulb directly in the scene.
- Set up a photo flood aimed at the heater, either from one side or from both sides. Use your judgement to see which is best. Clip the lights to a suitable object, use lamp stands, or have an assistant hold each light.
- Aim the lights roughly at a 45 degree angle from the heater, fairly close to the heater and just out of camera range.
- Emphasize the front of the heater - if necessary, use a piece of cardboard with the photoflood to shade background objects that are too bright.
- The photofloods are quite bright. You can take an exposure reading, and then turn them off until everything is set up and you are ready to shoot.

5) Get a fire ready in the heater.

- Open a cleanout and make sure that the heater has draft.
- Use balled up newspaper to create a quick 30 - 60 second fire. Use about 10 sheets of newspaper balled fairly tightly. Light the fire after the camera is set up with film and ready to go.

6) Film and Exposure

- For prints, use 100 ASA Kodacolor, for slides 100 ASA Kodachrome
- Set the aperture to F-8 and take an exposure reading to determine the correct shutter speed. F-8 will give you enough depth of field to ensure that everything is in focus, and reduces edge distortion with the wide angle lens.
- Using a cable release, take 8 exposures at the recommended shutter speed (for example, 1/60 sec), 8 exposures at the next lowest speed (for example, 1/30 sec), and 8 exposures at the next highest speed (for example, 1/125 sec).
- It is a good idea to shoot both a roll of print film and a roll of slide film. Slides are often preferred for publication. When you receive a request for photos from a magazine, you will have plenty of duplicates, in case photos don't get returned.

7) Digital Camera

A digital camera gives you more leeway to adjust the final result with photo editing software. You can adjust the brightness and contrast after the fact, so the exposure settings are less critical. If the camera only has an auto exposure setting, you can use that. Make sure that the flash is turned off.