

Electric Patio Heater Permit Checklist

San Francisco

FOR RESTAURANT AND BUSINESS OWNERS

1. Do You Need a Permit?

You likely do NOT need a permit if:

- You're plugging heaters into existing outdoor outlets (typically 120 V).
- You're using portable or wall-mounted units certified to UL/ETL standards.
- You're not adding new wiring, conduit, or panels.

For more detail, see [San Francisco Electrical Code, Section 89.121](#)

You likely DO need a permit if:

- You're adding or extending electrical circuits.
- The electrical load increase requires a breaker or panel upgrade.
- The heater is hard-wired (not plug-in).
- Local fire or building codes require review for outdoor electrical equipment.

2. Quick Checklist for Installing Electric Patio Heaters

Step	What to Do	Who to Contact
1. Check Outlets	Confirm GFCI protection (outlets that have 'test' and 'reset' buttons) and weatherproof covers.	Licensed electrician
2. Check Heater Specs	Verify voltage and amps of electric heaters match existing outdoor outlets.	Product manufacturer
3. Add Wiring (if needed)	Apply for an electrical permit.	See "Permit Checklist and Timelines" below
4. Set up enclosed patios	Verify ventilation and fire clearance.	Fire marshal https://sf-fire.org/fire-prevention
5. Store Documentation	Keep manufacturer instructions on site	Business owner

3. Permit Checklist and Timelines

Step	What to Do	Who to Contact
1. Hire a Licensed Electrician	The electrician must be a current, DBI-licensed electrical contractor.	Search the DBI Licensed Contractor Database: https://www2.cslb.ca.gov/OnlineServices/CheckLicense/CheckLicense.aspx Contact Focal for recommended partners.
2. Contractor Applies for Electrical Permit	Only licensed contractors can apply online for permits through the San Francisco Department of Building Inspection (DBI).	SF Department of Building Inspection (DBI): https://www.sf.gov/departments--department-building-inspection
3. Secure Permit & Conduct Electrical Work	The contractor must obtain a job card from DBI and keep it on-site to document inspection and approval.	SF Department of Building Inspection (DBI): https://www.sf.gov/departments--department-building-inspection
4. Submit to SF Shared Spaces Program	Once work is complete, submit the job card and permit to the Shared Spaces Program for review and approval.	SF Shared Spaces Program: https://www.sf.gov/shared-spaces
5. Install Focal Heaters	Follow the manufacturer's installation instructions and keep them on site. Focal installation is quick—see checklist above for guidance.	Focal: https://www.focalheat.co/ or Manufacturer

4. Pro Tips

- Use a dedicated circuit.
- Only use cords rated for outdoor use and protect from tripping hazards.
- Combine multiple heaters under one permit if required.
- Keep manufacturer documentation on hand.
- Electricians can often file same-day online permits.