

Electric Blanket Safety: Stay safe and warm this winter



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Introduction

To help you stay safe and warm in winter and to help reduce the number of unsafe electric blankets being used in homes, the Electrical Safety Council has produced this guidance on electric blanket safety.

“If your blanket is more than 10 years old, you should consider disposing of it safely and buying a new one”*

We recommend that you follow these simple steps when purchasing, using, storing and disposing of your electric blanket.

* Electrical Safety Council

Choosing an electric blanket

When choosing your electric blanket:

DO

- ✓ buy a new blanket from a reputable retailer
- ✓ look out for a UK Safety standard mark

DON'T

- ✗ buy secondhand blankets, as they may not be safe and you cannot be sure that they comply with current safety requirements



UK Safety standard marks

When purchasing a new electric blanket, we recommend you look out for a third party certification mark on the blanket and packaging. A certification mark will mean that the blanket has been independently tested and meets the latest UK and European safety standards.

**Examples of such certification marks
to look for are:**



Using your electric blanket

DO

- ✓ read and follow the manufacturer's instructions before use
- ✓ remember to keep the instructions in a safe place for future reference
- ✓ examine your blanket regularly for signs of wear or damage
- ✓ Use the blanket only for the purpose the manufacturer intended, i.e.:
 - Over-blankets must only be positioned above the occupant of the bed
 - Under-blankets must only be positioned under the occupant of the bed
- ✓ check the manufacturer's instructions for suitability to wash your blanket

- ✓ carry out a visual check of the blanket to make sure the blanket is intact with no visible signs of damage caused in transport when first purchased
- ✓ if the fuse in the 13 amp plug requires changing, a 3 amp BS 1362 fuse must be fitted

DON'T

- ✗ use the blanket whilst it is still folded, rucked or creased
- ✗ use a hot water bottle at the same time as using your electric blanket
- ✗ touch the blanket with wet hands or feet
- ✗ use the blanket if it is wet or damp



- ✘ insert or use pins to hold the blanket in place on the bed
- ✘ use underblankets on adjustable beds, or if used on an adjustable bed, check that the blanket and cord do not become trapped or rucked, for example in hinges
- ✘ use an electric blanket on the bed of a helpless person, an infant or a person who may have a condition that makes them insensitive to heat
- ✘ allow the appliance to be used by young children unless the controls have been pre-set by a parent/carer or that you are satisfied that the child is able to use the appliance safely
- ✘ allow people with pacemakers fitted to use heated bedding for all night use

Visual routine checks

Before putting your electric blanket on the bed to use over the winter months, take a few minutes to check that the blanket is safe for continued use.

Your blanket should be replaced with a new one if:

- fabric is worn or frayed
- scorch marks or discoloration areas are visible on the fabric
- wires are visible or poking through the fabric
- there is damage to the flexible cord between the supply plug and the control and/or the control to the blanket
- the control is making a buzzing sound when switched on and/or is giving off a smell

- the connector fitted to the blanket is damaged or over-heating

If you are in any doubt about your blanket, we recommend that you should contact the manufacturer before further use to check with them that the blanket is safe for continued use.



Storing your blanket

When your blanket is not in use, it should be stored as the manufacturer recommends and as follows:

DO

- ✓ leave the blanket on the bed all year round or place it flat on a spare bed
- ✓ let the blanket cool down before folding
- ✓ loosely fold or roll it in a towel or plastic bag and store the blanket in a cool dry place

DON'T

- ✗ use any moth proofing chemicals
- ✗ place heavy items on top of the blanket whilst it is being stored

Safe disposal of blankets

- if your blanket is more than 10 years old, you should consider disposing of it safely and buying a new one
- disposing of your electric blanket should comply with EU legislation under the WEEE Directive. This means that blankets should not be disposed of with general domestic waste
- blankets being disposed should be taken to a recycling facility which accepts electric and electronic appliances
- check with your Local Authority for your nearest recycling centre



Acknowledgements

WEST MIDLANDS FIRE SERVICE

West Midlands Fire Service



Age Concern



Trading Standards Institute

The Electrical Safety Council

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The Electrical Safety Council is an independent charity committed to reducing deaths and injuries through electrical accidents at home and at work.