



Electric Blanket Safety



Before plugging it in...

As the cold weather spreads across the country through the Autumn and Winter, many people in will be dusting-off their electric blankets. But be careful, don't risk a fire. Electric blankets account for over 5000 fires a year in the home and you can prevent these by taking these simple steps.

Check your electric blanket.

If your blanket or any part of the wiring shows any of these danger signs, you should have it checked or replaced:

- * Fraying fabric
- * Scorch marks
- * Exposed elements
- * Creasing or folding
- * Soiling
- * Damp patches
- * Tie tapes damaged or missing
- * Worn flex
- * Loose connections
- * An old BEAB safety mark - a round symbol (the new sign is white capital letters on a black background). This means it is more than 10 years old.

Buy a new electric blanket.

It's cheaper to replace a worn electric blanket than it is to replace your home. And your family is irreplaceable!! So if you are in any doubt about the condition of your blanket, bin it and buy a new one. You should replace your electric blanket at least every 10 years. Don't buy a second-hand blanket. You need to look for the British or European standard and make sure it has a safety certification mark. Make sure the blanket has over-heat protection.

Store your blanket safely.

Storing your blanket correctly will ensure you get the best from it. Don't fold electric blankets - it can damage the wiring. Better to roll them. Or you can store blankets by putting them on a spare bed. Electric underblankets can be left on your bed all year if you wish.

Always follow the instructions to be sure you are using you blanket safely.

Never use an electric underblanket as an electric overblanket, and vice versa.

Keep all blankets flat. Tie electric underblankets to the bed or mattress - this stops them slipping and creasing, which could damage them. Only leave a blanket switched on all night if it has thermostatic controls for safe all-night use. Otherwise switch it off and disconnect it before you get into bed.

Don't get blankets wet, and if your blanket does get wet, don't use it. Never switch it on to dry it.

Make sure your blanket is tested by an expert at least every three years. You can ask the shop where you bought it about testing and servicing, or contact the trading standards department at your local council - they often have free testing days.