

Client Help Sheet

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Electric Blanket Safety

Introduction

It is never too late to check the safety of your electric blanket. Even if you have been using one all Winter without checking to see if it is safe, it is worth your time to check the safety of your electric blanket today using our handy help sheet.

“Electric blankets if used safely can be a real asset towards keeping warm over winter at a far lower cost than keeping your central heating on all night.”

Electric blankets if used safely can be a real asset towards keeping warm over winter at a far lower cost than keeping your central heating on all night. In general, electric blankets are very safe if you follow the manufacturers instructions and take extra care over the storage of your electric blanket in the warmer months.

Before buying your electric blanket

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Always take care when purchasing your electric blanket. Always purchase your blanket from well known and reputable retailers. BHS, Tesco and Ocado are amongst some well known suppliers of electric blankets. Never buy from a shop or outlet that is unknown to you or who may stock dangerous electric blankets that could put you at risk of electrical shock or injury.

“Never buy a second hand blanket”

Get an idea of costs before you set out to buy your electric blanket. The internet or a catalogue is a good place to start. Remember if you find the price of an electric blanket that seems just a little too good - it probably is. Always make sure you are purchasing a genuine electric blanket that is safe for you to use.

Once you have found an electric blanket that you like, check to ensure it is marked with a UK safety standard mark found on the blanket itself and on the packaging. This certifies that the electric blanket conforms to the latest safety standards in the UK and Europe.

Never buy a second hand blanket

Even if the electric blanket will be coming from someone who you know, never assume that they have used or stored the electric blanket correctly. Many electric blankets have to be disposed of every year because they have been accidentally stored incorrectly. Incorrect storage can cause damage to the small electrical wires inside the blanket leaving you at risk of electric shock or worse.



Remember it is better to not have an electric blanket than one that may put your life at risk. Never take a chance with an electric blanket.

Before using your electric blanket

Before using your electric blanket for the first time, always read and understand the manufacturers instructions before you switch on. Remember to keep the instructions in a safe place as you may need to refer to them when you put your electric blanket into storage.

Even when it is new, carefully examine the electric blanket for any damage or wear. Particularly check the cable and wires for damage and ensure no bare wire is exposed. Ensure the plug is

firmly in place. Make sure no damage caused by transportation is present on the blanket.

Look for fabric that is worn or frayed, scorch marks or unexplained discolouration on the fabric, there is a buzzing noise when switch on or the connector is overheating.

Only use your electric blanket for the purpose intended

With many electric blankets and associated products available on the market, it is easy to become confused. Never use the product for another use. Here are just a few commonly found electric blanket products. Make sure you purchase the correct product for your needs.



- *Electric heated cushion*

Useful for heating up cold spots on chairs and beds. Could be used to help with bad backs and other aches and pains.

- *Electric Under blankets*

Designed to go on top of your mattress using the supplied tie tapes, an under blanket is great for keeping you warm over Winter. Never use an under blanket over a person and if you have a memory foam mattress, always ensure it is suitable to use on them. Some under blankets are not suitable for use with memory foam, always check the packaging for suitability. An under blanket is used between your mattress and sheet and are also known as mattress protectors and mattress covers.

- *Electric Throws*

You can use these on top of your duvet and they will heat your bed very quickly. They are more flexible and can be removed easily.

- *Electric Over blankets*

Used over the occupant of the bed in addition to a top sheet and duvet. Also known as electric toppers.

Using your electric blanket safely

Don't

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Electric Blanket Safety

- NEVER use whilst still folded, rolled, rucked or creased. Unfold your electric blanket fully before use.
- Use a hot water bottle with your electric blanket. It could leak. Remember water and electricity do not mix.
- Never touch your electric blanket with wet hands or feet. Always ensure your body is dry if you have just bathed before getting into bed.
- Never use the electric blanket if it is wet or damp. Always refer to the manufacturers instructions which will tell you if it is safe to wash your electric blanket. Many electric blankets can also be tumble dried but always make sure it is completely dry before using on your bed.
- Never use pins to hold electric under blankets in place, you could pierce a wire. Use the tapes supplied.



Replacing and maintenance of your electric blanket

If you are satisfied with your visual checks every year before using your electric blanket then there is no need to do anything further for 3 years. After this time, it is recommended that you have your electric blanket serviced. This can be arranged with your local electrician or through the shop where you initially purchased the blanket.

Servicing is recommended every 3 years then replacement of your electric blanket after 10 years. If your blanket is more than 10 years old, then replacement with a new electric blanket is recommended.

If you have any doubt over the safety of your electric blanket, do not use and consult a qualified electrician.

Safe Storage of your electric blanket

Always store your electric blanket in accordance to the manufacturers instructions. The best storage solution is to store it flat on a spare bed during the summer months.

Otherwise it can be folded, or rolled for storage. Always ensure that your electric blanket can be safely folded. Always fold or roll loosely. Electric blankets can be kept in a plastic box, their original packaging or with a towel wrapped around.

Do not use any chemicals to deter moths and other pests and do not store other items on top of your electric blanket.