FIRE SAFETY IN THE WINTER
Did you know?

• Around 65 fires a year are caused by faulty electric blankets.
• Two fires a day are caused by heaters.
• In England on average, 7,700 chimney fires occur every year.

This leaflet will help you keep safe throughout the winter period as this can be a particularly risky time for fires due to the need to keep warm.
Heating your home

Open fires

• Be careful when using open fires to keep warm. Make sure you always use a fire guard to protect against flying sparks from hot embers.

• Make sure embers are under control and properly put out before you go to bed.

• Keep chimneys and flues clean and well maintained.
Heating your home

Using portable heaters

Keep heaters away from curtains and furniture and never use them for drying clothes.

• Always unplug electric heaters when you go out or go to bed.

• Try to secure heaters against a wall to stop them falling over.

• Only use gas or paraffin heaters in well-ventilated areas. Heaters consume oxygen so you could suffocate if a room is not properly aired.

Top tip

Keep away from fabric
**Keeping warm**

**Using electric blankets**

**Never use hot water bottles in the same bed as an electric blanket, even if the blanket is switched off.**

- Unplug blankets before you get into bed, unless they have a thermostat control for safe all-night use.
- Store electric blankets flat, rolled up or loosely folded to prevent damaging the internal wiring.
- Test electric blankets every 3 years. Age UK or your local fire and rescue service may be able to do this for you.

- Try not to buy second-hand blankets and check regularly for wear and tear. Replace your blanket when it is more than 10 years old.
- Always follow the manufacturer’s instructions.
- Look out for the following symbols which show a blanket is safe to use.

![British Standard Kitemark](image)

**Top tip**

Store electric blankets flat or rolled up
If the electricity fails

Alternative lighting

Keep a battery operated light or torch handy in the event of a power cut or failure.

- If you have to use candles or matches always take special care. Put them out completely before leaving the room or going to bed.
- Make sure candles are secured in a proper holder and away from materials that may catch fire – like curtains.
- Keep a mobile phone handy so you can still make an emergency call if there is a power cut.

Top tip

Keep a torch and batteries handy
Fire safety for thatched buildings

Fit a smoke alarm in the loft and make sure it is connected with other alarms in the house.

- Use lightning conductors that have been tested and check they carry one of these signs – they show they are approved and are safe.
- Don’t burn rubbish or garden waste near a thatched property.
- Use a bulkhead light fitting in your loft space, instead of an exposed light bulb, as these are more of a fire hazard.
- Never light fireworks near the property.

Fit TV aerials to free-standing poles to avoid thatched roofs being struck by lightning.

Top tip

Fit a smoke alarm in the loft
For more information on general fire safety visit www.facebook.com/firekills

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