FIRE SAFETY IN THE WINTER
Did you know?

• Around 100 fires a year are caused by faulty electric blankets.

• In England on average, 7,600 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.
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.
• Look out for the following symbols which show a blanket is safe to use.

[Images of symbols indicating safety and British Standard Kitemark]

Top tip

Store electric blankets flat or rolled up

[Image of electric blanket stored properly]

[Image indicating no hot water bottles in bed]

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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.
- Use a snuffer or a spoon to put out candles. It’s safer than blowing them out when sparks can fly.
- 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