



**Office of the Maine State Fire Marshal  
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## **Guidelines for Using Electric Blankets Safely**



- ✓ Only use electric blankets that have been approved by nationally recognized testing agencies, such as Underwriters Laboratories (UL).
- ✓ Don't fold an electric blanket when storing or using it: the wires inside the blanket can become damaged and cause it to overheat and cause a fire.
- ✓ Check blankets for worn areas, loose plugs or other damage. If your blanket is very old or damaged, get a new electric blanket. The cost of a new blanket is small compared to the cost of a fire or a burn injury. We want you to stay warm and safe!
- ✓ Don't put blankets on top of an electric blanket, and don't use an electric blanket and a heating pad at the same time. Heat can become trapped in the bedding layers and cause burns.
- ✓ Turn off and unplug an electric blanket when it isn't being used. Make sure electrical cords aren't in the walking area, so people won't trip on them.
- ✓ Don't put electrical cords under rugs or fasten them to walls with staples or other fasteners. The protective covering can get worn and expose the wiring, which can lead to a fire.

### **Health Concerns**

- Diabetic people shouldn't sleep with an electric blanket on, due to the fact that diabetics can lose sensitivity to heat in their legs and feet, which can cause burns if the blanket is turned up too high. In order to safely have a warm bed, they can pre-heat the bed by turning on the blanket before bedtime, and then turn it off and unplug it when they get into bed.
- People who are incontinent shouldn't use an electric blanket, because the wiring system can become wet and malfunction. Better choices for keeping warm would be a down comforter, flannel sheets and/or warm socks.