

## Tips for Space Heaters and Electric Blankets

Many people turn to space heaters or electric blankets for warmth in the winter. B-Y Electric reminds those who use space heaters and electric blankets to keep safety in mind and to use these devices with caution.

When buying a space heater or electric blanket, check for approved safety certification marks to verify the product has been tested for safety. Look for a space heaters and electric blankets with safety features, like an automatic shut off. Be cautious about buying used space heaters or electric blankets. Here are some tips for using space heaters and electric blankets:

- Review and follow all manufacturer directions.
- Plug space heaters and electric blankets directly into outlets; avoid using an extension cord.
- Always remember to turn off space heaters and electric blankets when not in use. Never leave them unattended or after going to bed.
- Many fires start when flammable products are placed too close to heating devices. Space heaters should be kept at least 3 feet from blankets, clothing, paper, and other flammables.
- Place space heaters out of high-traffic areas and on a level, hard, non-flammable floor surface — NOT on carpets, furniture, or counter tops.
- Be aware of pets and children near heating appliances. Pets should never be allowed to sleep on top of electric blankets.
- Keep space heaters and electric blankets away from water. If they become wet, do not turn them on to dry.
- Regularly examine cords to make sure there is no cracking or fraying. Do not use damaged appliances. Also inspect your electric blanket to ensure that it is not worn or damaged. It should not have any charred or dark areas. Replace old or damaged blankets.
- Store your electric blanket in a manner which avoids creasing. If it cannot be stored flat, loosely fold or roll the blanket in a cool, dry closet.

In addition to safety precautions, remember space heaters and electric blankets are high energy users. Most are 1,500-watt devices which means they use 1.5 kilowatts per hour. If you use a space heater for 16 hours a day, 31 days a month, you will add 744 kWhs to your electric bill. If you use three space heaters for the same amount of time, you will add 2,232 kWhs just in space heater electric usage.

