



Westbury Area Board Report

This report is for the period 011211- 31121

Activities:

FIRES	
Accidental Fires attended	
Deliberate Fires attended	
Total Fires	2
No of Co-responding calls(for ambulance service)	0
No of Road Traffic Collisions attended	1
No of fire related deaths or injuries	NIL
No of Home Fire Safety visits	15

Electric blanket safety warning after house fire

A family from Leigh, near Cricklade, had a lucky escape yesterday (15 December) after fire broke out in an electric blanket.

The fire happened shortly after 7.45am in the master bedroom of the semi-detached house. Firefighters from Cricklade and Westlea arrived quickly to fully extinguish the blaze, which led to smoke damage throughout the first floor of the property.

Group Manager Kathy Collis, from Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Service's community safety department, has now issued a warning to other people to get their electric blankets tested. She said: "This family was extremely lucky, as they were quickly aware of the fire - they were able to get out of the house safely, and the damage was contained to the first floor. Electric blankets can be a serious fire hazard if they're old or not maintained properly, so we would urge anyone who owns one to make sure it is safety checked every year. If you're in doubt, you should buy a new one."

The following advice can help:

- When choosing your electric blanket, buy from a reliable source and check that it has a UK safety standard mark.

- Before you use your blanket, make sure that it - or its power cable - doesn't show any of the following danger signs:
 - scorch marks or discoloration areas visible on the fabric
 - wires visible or poking through the fabric
 - frayed or worn fabric
 - damage to the power cable between the plug and the control mechanism or between the control and the blanket
 - a buzzing sound or a scorching smell from the control unit when switched on
 - damage to the blanket's connector, where the electrical cable plugs into the blanket

If you are in any doubt about your blanket, contact the manufacturer before you use it to make sure that it is safe - it may need to be replaced.

Even when your blanket is not in use, you can leave it on the bed all year round or place it flat on a spare bed, although it should only be plugged in when in use. If you put the blanket away, it should be stored as the manufacturer recommends or loosely rolled in a towel or plastic bag before being placed in a cool, dry place.

All homes should be fitted with working smoke alarms, which should be tested regularly.

For further information on home fire safety, visit www.wiltsfire.gov.uk

Michael R Franklin
Partnerships & Community Engagement Manager
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