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## **WINTER GUIDANCE AND SAFETY WARNING:**

Due to unprecedented inclement weather and the need for supplemental heating the following information is being made available. Finding a balance between the resident's safety and comfort is critical when adding supplemental heating.

### **Can we use SPACE HEATERS to supplement our heating?**

**SPACE HEATERS** are **PROHIBITED** from being used in all health care facilities.

NFPA, Life Safety Code 101, as adopted, Section 18.7.8/19.7.8 Portable Space-Heating Devices. Portable space-heating devices shall be prohibited in all health care occupancies.

Space heaters may be overloading to already fully-loaded or over-worked electrical systems, which becomes a potential fire hazard.

### **Are Heating Blankets allowed?**

Heating Blankets are allowed if properly used and maintained. The device must be Underwriter's Laboratory, UL listed or otherwise tested and approved by a nationally-recognized and approved testing laboratory. Follow the Manufacturer's Recommendations. Do not use extension cords with electric blankets; they must be plugged into a permanent receptacle. Keep in mind the potential overloading of electrical systems during these already high use periods. Have an established policy to inspect the cord for fraying, exposed wires or other defects, both at initial use and on a regular basis thereafter. Document and record your maintenance and have it available for inspection. Also, look for corroded or charred electrical plugs. Do not set furniture or other items on the cord. Inspect and monitor the blanket laid over the resident to assure it is in good condition and not too hot to cause any initial burns.

NFPA 99, 1999-edition, 7.2.3.1 Heated Surfaces. Sustained skin contact with surfaces of equipment that have temperatures in excess of 107 degrees F (42 degrees C) can cause burns. Caution is required when exposing patients to warmed surfaces, particularly when they are helpless.

Check Consumer Product Safety Commission's website for any recalled or defective devices.

<http://www.cpsc.gov/en/Recalls/>

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