

WIEC NEWS

P.O. Box 338 ■ Carthage, Illinois 62321 ■ www.wiec.net ■ 800/576-3125

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

The weather outside is frightful but the electric blanket feels delightful

When used properly and safely, electric blankets or throws can help keep you toasty during cold winter months. Here are a few safety tips for electric blankets and heating pads to keep in mind:

- ❄ Purchase items only if they have been approved by an independent testing facility, such as Underwriters Laboratories (UL).
- ❄ Inspect all cords and connections for cracks and frayed edges, which are a huge fire and injury hazard. Replace blankets or heating pads with faulty cords.
- ❄ Discard (7716-22) your blanket or heating pad if you see dark or charred spots on the surface.
- ❄ Read the instructions that come with the blanket. Some models should not have another cover on top of it. The safety instructions included in the packaging specifically state it's safe to do so. Some newer models protect against overheating.



- ❄ Once your electric blanket or heating pad is switched on, keep it laid flat—a folded device can cause a fire, as can a blanket that's been tucked in (which can bend wires).
- ❄ Never use heated bedding while asleep—look for a model with a timer that switches off automatically.

Sources: *Electrical Safety Foundation International, U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission*



Western Illinois
ELECTRICAL COOP.
A Touchstone Energy Cooperative

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OFFICE HOURS

8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Monday - Friday

**DURING OFFICE HOURS,
OR AFTER HOURS
TO REPORT OUTAGE**

217-357-3125
800-576-3125

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MAP LOCATION CONTEST

Every month we are printing four member's map location numbers in the newsletter. If you find your map location number call the WIEC office by the 25th of the following month, tell us where it is and we will give you a \$10.00 bill credit. Keep on reading the WIEC News.

Is it hot - or is it not?
Always consider a fallen wire

HOT!

It's good information for everyone to know. If you come upon a fallen wire or a wire that is hanging from a pole, consider it HOT! Call the electric utility that owns the pole and report the problem, then keep everyone away. The fallen wire may be a telephone wire, a cable TV wire or a loose guy wire that is touching a live electric wire, so don't make a guess about it. WIEC (7513-64) and all other electric would rather respond to false alarms than to a serious injury or fatality.

Remember - don't guess. Always "Think Hot" when confronted with a fallen or dangling wire.

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Welcome New Members

Jennifer Brunswig, Plymouth
 Christopher John Burger, Niota
 Kevin Cale, Niota
 Tyler & Megan Carlisle, Carthage
 Jamie & Erin M Day, Bowen

Denis L & Rebecca H
 Housewright, Basco
 Kyle Koopmans, Gladstone
 Rebecca J Link, LaHarpe

Nikki & Matthew Miller, Eaton,
 CO
 South Morgan Acres, Carthage
 Jesse Walker, Niota

Size Matters: Measuring An Air Filter's Size

Check to see if your furnace has an existing air filter. If so, does it fit properly? If it contains a disposable air filter, are there any squashed corners or has the filter been forced into the system to fit? If not, the size should be labeled on the side of the filter (example: 16" X 20" X 1").

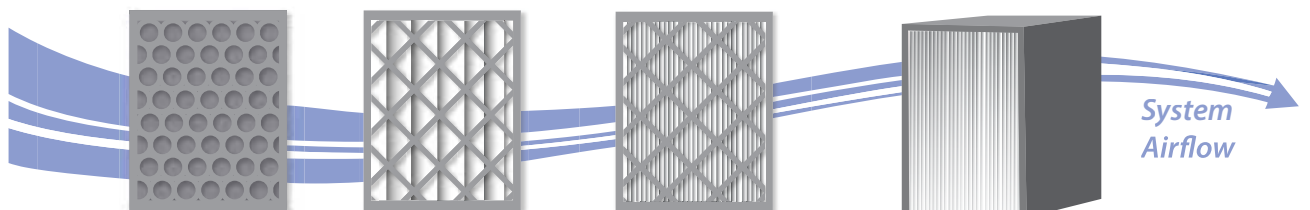
If the size is not clearly labeled, measure the filter with a ruler. Keep in mind that many disposable filter





manufacturers undercut their filters by anywhere from 1/4" to 1/2". In most cases, you should be able to use closest standard size. A filter measuring 15-3/4" X 19-3/4" (8624-64) could be replaced with a 16" x 20" filter (most manufacturers' standard-size filters are undercut by 1/2"). If the filter does not fit properly or you do not have an existing air filter in your system, measure the duct opening.

Armed with a flashlight and a stiff tape measure, look inside the section of the furnace where the filter should be located. There should be a 1" filter track or opening, and bear in mind the filter should cover the duct opening. Measure the height and width of the duct opening; allow a bit of overlap if you have room. That is the exact size needed for a new filter.

What Do Different Air Filters Block?

Air filters are rated by Minimum Efficiency Reporting Value (MERV). Filters with a higher MERV block more dirt, but also reduce airflow and system efficiency. Use this guide to find the right filter for your home or business.



	1-4 MERV \$2-\$10	5-8 MERV \$10-\$20	9-12 MERV \$18-\$25	13-20 MERV \$\$\$
Blocked Items	Pollen, sanding dust, large insect bodies 	+ Pet dander, mold, spores, dust mites, hair spray 	+ Lead dust, milled flour, car emission particles 	+ Bacteria, virus, face powder, smoke, sneezes, paint pigments, oil, carbon dust 
Filter Types	Disposable, washable	Pleated, disposable, electrostatic	Pleated, disposable, electrostatic	High efficiency particulate arrestance (HEPA), box 6-12 inches thick, flexible 12-36 inches thick
Common Uses	Homes, window air conditioning units	Better homes, general office buildings	Superior homes, better office buildings, businesses	Hospitals, drug and electronic labs

Source: epa.gov/iaq

Thinking about using an electric space heater? Check out this information first

It's doesn't matter if you're using a \$400.00 portable electric heater in a fancy wood cabinet or a \$25.00 electric "milkhouse" heater purchased at the local hardware store, they can drive up your electric bill if not properly managed.

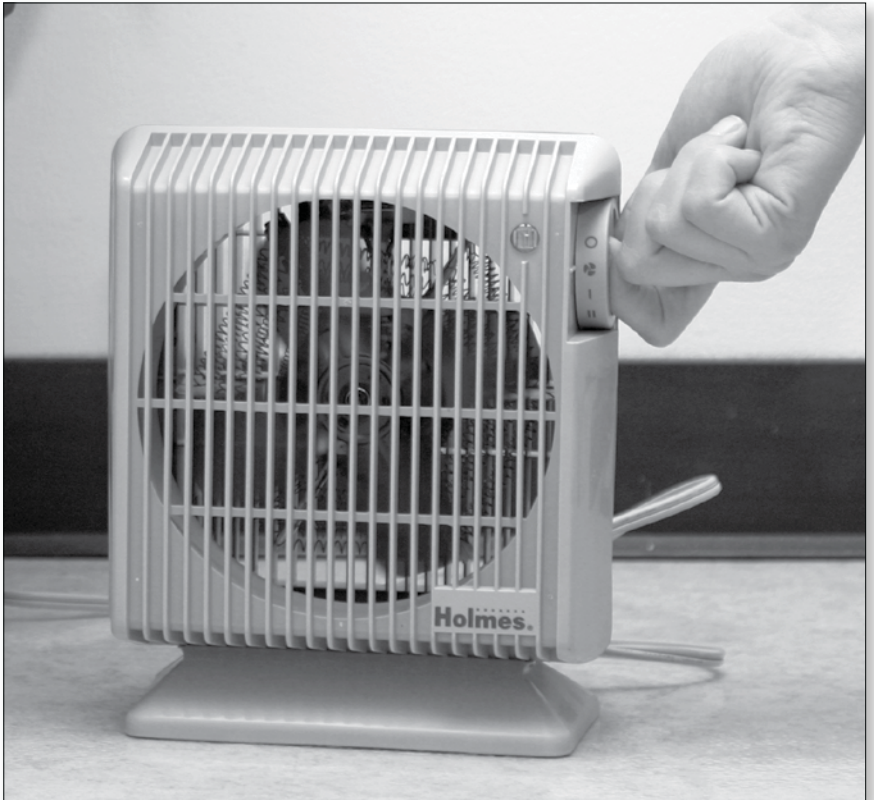
How they work

All electric heaters use the same method to change electricity into heat: electric resistance. This occurs when electric current is sent through a material that is "resistant" to the flow of electricity. It's the same process used in your toaster, hair dryer, electric water heater and stove-top cooking elements.

Unlike copper and similar metals with low resistance to electricity's flow, these materials glow red as the electric current is converted into heat. Because every electric heater uses this same process, they all have the same efficiency ---100%.

There are no losses. Whatever the heater's shape, size or marketing claims, the amount of heat coming out is determined by the amount of electricity going in. This is listed in watts on the nameplate. Therefore, any two heaters with a rating of 1,500 watts on the nameplate will deliver the same amount of heat, no matter what they look like. (A minor amount of energy may be used to power a small fan, but this is insignificant for portable-size heaters).

If you use a 1,500-watt heater for 12 hours per day for 30 days, you can expect to add about \$68.00 to your electric bill.



Use them safely

If you do use a space heater, keep the following safety tips in mind:

- ✓ Make sure the unit is equipped with automatic shutoff features and heating element guards.
- ✓ Do not use an extension cord with a space heater.
- ✓ Keep clothes, papers and other combustibles well away from the heater.
- ✓ Never leave a space heater unattended. Turn off and unplug the unit before leaving the room or going to bed.



Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Your heat pump can use 10 percent to 25 percent more energy if it's not properly maintained, which includes regularly checking and replacing the air filter when it's dirty to keep parts from working too hard or even becoming damaged. Keep brush and plants tidy around the outdoor unit, and dust the return registers inside. **(7814-58)** For more details on heat pump maintenance, visit EnergySavers.gov.

Source: U.S. Department of Energy