

Electrical safety guide

Power points, cords and plugs

- Multiple plugs can overload a power point and wiring. Get another power point installed by a registered electrical contractor.
- Broken switches and sockets are dangerous. Cover them and have them replaced by a registered electrical contractor.
- Household cleaners, detergents and insecticides may cause cracking and create an electrical hazard if sprayed on electrical appliances.
- Make sure flexible cord reels are fully unwound. Overheating may occur if used to supply high-wattage appliances.
- Frayed or damaged cords are dangerous and should be replaced immediately.
- Portable generator sets can be just as dangerous as mains supply if misused. Before connecting a generator to your house, check with your electricity distributor.

Tip

Always use a registered electrical contractor

All electrical wiring work, including the connection of fixed appliances such as air conditioners and water heaters must be carried out by a registered electrical contractor.

Quick contacts

Be careful where you dig.

Call Dial Before You Dig on **1100** or visit www.1100.com.au



Note: DBYD do not provide information on underground wiring on private land.

For further information go to www.esv.vic.gov.au or phone ESV on **(03) 9203 9700**.



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Creating a safer state with electricity and gas

Protect yourself from electrical shock, injury and death.

Electrical accidents cause too many injuries and deaths. By taking some simple precautions you can avoid electrical fires, electric shocks and electrocution.

Got a shock?

- **Always treat a tingle or slight shock as a warning.** Contact a registered electrical contractor.
- **Never touch an appliance that caused a shock until it has been disconnected from the power source.** Label it clearly to prevent anyone else from using it until it has been repaired and tested or replaced.

Electricity and water

- An electric shock near the swimming pool is more likely to be fatal than anywhere else. Never use a portable electrical appliance or place an extension cord where it could be splashed or fall into the pool.
- Never touch electrical appliances or switches with wet hands—it could give you an electric shock.
- Never leave an electrical appliance where it could fall into the bath or basin. Always unplug after use.
- Never use a portable electric radiator in the bathroom. A permanently installed heater is much safer.

In the home

- Wear rubber or plastic soled shoes in the laundry or when using electrical appliances outside. Many victims of serious electric shock accidents have bare feet.
- If the power fails switch off all heaters and irons. These heating appliances can cause fires if the power turns on unexpectedly.
- If an appliance needs adjusting or cleaning, switch off the power and pull out the plug.
- Electric blankets should be used according to the manufacturer's instructions. Tie the tapes so the blanket can't crease. Have your electric blanket checked at least once every five years.

Outside the home and home repairs

- Before using power tools, check they are in good working condition. If they're not, don't use them.
- Keep the flexible cord well clear of your electric trimmer, chainsaw or lawn mower when in use. If the cord is damaged, don't touch the appliance—switch power off at the plug.
- Never attach swings, clothes lines or hanging baskets to beams with electrical wiring.
- Only use approved hand lamps fitted with guards to protect the lamp. Home-made hand lamps are dangerous.
- Strictly adhere to all safety precautions when using electric arc welders. Human contact between the electrode and the work can be fatal.
- Keep clear of electric wires attached to your house or shed—take particular care when using a metal ladder.
- Be careful where you dig, there may be buried cables.
- Never use oversize fuse wires—they can cause fires. When a fuse blows repeatedly, there is a fault—call a registered electrician.

Safety switches save lives

Make sure your home has safety switches installed. Safety switches monitor the flow of electricity through a circuit; if a problem is detected they can turn off the power within 0.03 of a second. Safety switches are mandatory on both power and lighting circuits in new homes and older properties where renovations are carried out. If your home does not have one, ESV recommends you get one installed.

There are three types of safety switches:

- **Switchboard mounted safety switches** can provide efficient protection for your entire home by protecting all power and lighting circuits. These must be installed by a registered electrical contractor or licensed electrician
- **Power outlet safety switches** are designed to protect a single electrical circuit in your home. These must be installed by a registered electrical contractor or licensed electrician
- **Plug in safety switches** provide portable protection and can be taken outside or to areas where you don't usually use electricity. These plug directly into a power outlet and only protect the appliance that is plugged into them. Portable safety switches are available from all major hardware and electrical retailers.

A registered electrical contractor or licensed electrician must be used to install switchboard mounted or power outlet safety switches in your home and issue a Certificate of Electrical Safety for your assurance.

Quick contacts

Check www.esv.vic.gov.au or call **1800 800 158** for safety advice and servicing information.