

Electrical Safety Checklist

An electrical safety checklist covering outlets, cords, GFCIs, the panel and alarm context.

Outlets & Switches

- Check that outlets and switches are not warm, cracked or discolored
Warmth or scorching signals a serious hazard — call an electrician
- Confirm outlets hold plugs snugly without falling out
- Install tamper-resistant outlets or covers in homes with children
- Avoid overloading outlets with too many high-draw devices
- Listen for buzzing or crackling and stop using affected outlets
- Hire a licensed electrician to replace any damaged outlet

GFCIs & AFCIs

- Test GFCI outlets monthly with the test and reset buttons
- Confirm GFCI protection in kitchens, baths, garages and outdoors
- Replace GFCI outlets that fail to trip or reset
- Check that outdoor outlets have weatherproof covers
- Ask an electrician about AFCI breakers for bedroom circuits

Cords & Plugs

- Inspect cords for fraying, cracking, cuts or exposed wires
- Replace or discard damaged cords instead of taping them
- Keep cords out from under rugs and away from foot traffic
Trapped cords overheat and start fires
- Use extension cords only as a temporary solution
- Choose surge protectors rated for your devices, not daisy-chained strips
- Unplug space heaters and chargers when not in use

Electrical Panel (Pro Work)

- Keep the area in front of the panel clear and accessible
- Label breakers clearly so circuits are easy to identify
- Note any frequent tripping and report it to an electrician
- Never open the panel cover or touch breakers and wiring yourself
All panel work must be done by a licensed electrician
- Have an electrician inspect older fuse boxes and aluminum wiring

Appliances & Lighting

- Match bulb wattage to fixture ratings to prevent overheating
- Unplug small appliances when not in use
- Keep heat-producing appliances clear of curtains and paper
- Stop using any appliance that sparks, smells or shocks you
- Give large appliances their own dedicated circuits where required

Alarms & Emergency Readiness

- Test smoke and carbon-monoxide alarms monthly
- Replace alarm batteries yearly and units over 10 years old

- Keep a Class C or multipurpose fire extinguisher accessible
- Know how to shut off main power in an emergency
- Plan and practice a home fire escape route with the household