



Fact Sheet: Do-It-Yourself Home Electrical Safety

Over the last decade, the U.S. home improvement market has nearly doubled in size to \$280 billion a year, according to the Joint Center for Housing Studies at Harvard University. At the same time, the State of Home Safety in America report found that emergency departments reported more than 330,000 visits due to injuries with home workshop equipment in a single year. Whether replacing a light fixture, repairing an outlet, or installing a home entertainment system, DIY home improvements and repairs can put individuals, families, and homes at risk if they are not done correctly. Poorly executed electrical work performed by inexperienced homeowners can cause immediate injuries and electrocutions, and may introduce new dangers into the home.

Mind the G.A.P – Get A Professional!

Today, more homeowners are tackling do-it-yourself projects than ever before. But sometimes, their enthusiasm is accompanied by a lack of understanding of the inherent risks introduced by electricity. Working with electricity requires thorough planning and extreme care, and safety should always be the foremost concern for anyone who is working on or around electricity.

Whether you are a first-time do-it-yourselfer or a “weekend warrior,” always “Mind the G.A.P” – and *get a professional* if a gap exists between those projects that you are safely able to perform and those that only a professional electrician should handle.

The best way to protect your family and your home is to hire a qualified, licensed electrician to perform any electrical work in your home. However, if you do decide to do-it-yourself, the guidelines below will help ensure that you take all necessary steps to ensure your safety and the safety of those around you.

Do-It-Yourself Electrical Safety Tips

Many electrocutions and home electrical fires can be prevented with an understanding of basic principles and an adherence to safe practices. Before undertaking any home electrical project, consider the following important safety tips:

- Never attempt a project that is beyond your skill level. Knowing when to call a professional may help prevent electrical fires, injuries, and fatalities.
- Make an effort to learn how to understand and safely navigate your home electrical system.
- Always turn off the power to the circuit that you plan to work on by switching off the circuit breaker in the main service panel.
- Test the wires before you touch them to make sure that the power has been turned off.
- Never touch plumbing or gas pipes when performing a do-it-yourself electrical project.
- Be sure to unplug any lamp or appliance before working on it.
- Never stand in a puddle or on a damp floor when working directly on or near electricity.
- Always have your work inspected upon completion to ensure that it has been done correctly.
- Use a GFCI with every power tool to protect against electrical shock hazards.

As Americans continue to expect more from their electrical systems, home improvements and repairs will become increasingly important. Consumer education and awareness will help to prevent electrical fires, accidents, and electrocutions in and around the home.

To learn more about ESFi and the Should I DIY? Home Safety Campaign, visit www.electrical-safety.org.