

# Safety switches save lives!

Install one now and test it regularly

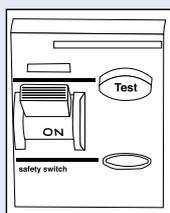


## Protect your family from electrocution

Many people have been injured or have died from electric shocks in Queensland homes.

Electricity can cause dangerous situations in your home. Things that could lead to electrical accidents include:

- a faulty appliance or power tool
- damage to an electrical cable
- lack of maintenance
- unsafe practices.



A safety switch can help guard against an electrical tragedy in your home. Potentially fatal electrical shocks occur when current flows through a person to earth. Safety switches are designed to cut the supply of electricity in a fraction of a second when a harmful level of electricity is detected leaking to earth.

You can help protect your family and yourself by having a safety switch installed on your home electrical circuits.

## When a safety switch operates

If your safety switch operates (turns off the power), there may be a fault present. This can often be caused by a faulty appliance. Reset the safety switch – if it operates again, the last appliance plugged in will be the most likely cause. Disconnect the appliance from the power point and reset the safety switch. If everything now functions properly, do not use the appliance until it has been checked by a licensed electrical contractor or the manufacturer's authorised agent.

If the safety switch continues to operate, disconnect all appliances and plug them in one at a time until you locate the faulty one. Avoid touching appliances while carrying out this process. If you continue to have problems, contact your licensed electrical contractor.

## Check for a safety switch

Safety switches have been compulsory for power point circuits in all new Queensland homes since July 1992. This means many Queensland homes already have a safety switch installed which protects most of the power point circuits. However, safety switches may be missing from homes built before that time.

The switchboard is the best place to look for permanently installed safety switches.

Safety switches can be easily identified— they are the ones with a 'test' or 'T' button.

## Make sure it works – every three months

To make sure you are getting maximum protection from your safety switch, you should regularly test the switch according to the manufacturer's instructions. A good rule of thumb is to test safety switches every three months. A great way to remember this is to do it whenever you receive an electricity bill.

To do this you only need to press the 'test' or 'T' button. If the switch turns off the power, then it is working correctly. If it doesn't turn the power off, have it replaced by a licensed electrical contractor as soon as possible.

## Safety switches, circuit breakers and fuses

Safety switches and circuit breakers or fuses do different things. Safety switches help protect people from electrocution, where as circuit breakers and fuses primarily protect only electrical equipment.

The Electrical Safety Office recommends householders consider the installation of permanent safety switches on all electrical circuits by a licensed electrical contractor to ensure the safety of your home.

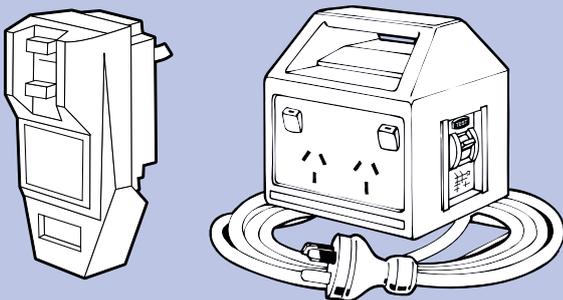
## Fitting a safety switch

Permanent safety switches must be installed by a licensed electrical contractor. Contact details can be found in the Yellow Pages, White Pages, your local newspaper or by contacting an electrical industry association.

When choosing a licensed electrical contractor always look for their electrical contractor licence number in any advertisement, and confirm that they have a current licence before agreeing to any work. You can do this by checking their electrical contractor licence or via the online licensing database at [www.electricalsafety.qld.gov.au](http://www.electricalsafety.qld.gov.au).

Safety switches are also available as portable units which provide protection where permanent safety switch protection is not available. A portable safety switch is ideal for use with portable electrical equipment such as power tools and should be plugged into a power point ahead of the electrical equipment or extension lead to be protected.

Although safety switches are a proven method of preventing most serious electric shocks, they are not a substitute for proper electrical maintenance and safe practices.



## Buying or selling a house, flat or unit

Check whether there is an electrical safety switch installed on the premises.

If there is no safety switch on the premises, one must be installed within three months of the settlement date (legal possession). The law applies to any home transfer including estate, Family Law and mortgagee transfers. Maximum penalties exceed \$1500.

## Sellers' responsibilities

Sellers must declare whether the home has a safety switch. This must be declared on the:

- sales contract (e.g. REIQ contract for houses and land)
- Queensland Land Registry Property Information (Transfer) – Form 24.

Real estate agents and solicitors should be aware of these requirements.

If the home has been sold or transferred after 1 September 2002, a licensed electrical contractor can only do installation work if a safety switch is installed as part of the work, or if it is an emergency.

Some sellers might prefer to have a safety switch installed before they place a home on the market.

It will satisfy financiers who require confirmation that a safety switch is installed, and potential buyers will know they are protected from most types of electrical shock.

## Domestic rental properties

Leased domestic residences are required by law to have safety switches installed for all power points. If the property you are renting does not have a safety switch installed, contact your landlord and advise them of their legal requirement to have safety switch protection installed by a licensed electrical contractor.

## Have you tested your safety switch lately?

## Warning

Safety switches can protect against the most frequent cause of electrocution – from electrical current passing through the body to earth. However, complete protection under all circumstances is not possible from any device.

It is important to have regular checks on all appliances, electrical wiring, extension leads and electrical equipment to maintain them in good working order.

By law all electrical work must be carried out by a licensed electrical contractor.

**Never attempt to do your own electrical work. It's dangerous, illegal, and can be fatal.**

**Always get a licensed electrical contractor to do any electrical work.**

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