Electrical DIY

electricalsafetyfirst.org.uk/guidance/safety-around-the-home/electrical-diy

In this section

Don't Die for DIY

Did you know that DIY errors cause half of all serious electric shocks in UK homes?

Almost 50% of men admit that they feel they should try and tackle household maintenance and repair jobs themselves or ask a mate before calling in a professional.

But our survey discovered that nearly half of all severe electric shocks are caused by DIY attempts, with the main errors including cutting through power leads, drilling into wiring and repairing electrical items while they're still switched on.

In addition, in a survey of registered electricians a third said they had seen or been involved with fixing electrical DIY mishaps that had resulted in fires, serious electric shock or significant repair costs.

Online Advice?

Many people now turn to Google or YouTube to search for DIY tips. But you need to make sure you're getting guidance from a reputable source.

Our 'Don't Die for DIY' campaign is drawing attention to the fact that you can't always rely on the electrical DIY information and advice you find online.

Find out more about our 'Don't Die for DIY' campaign

Top five tips for electrical DIY

1. Locate cables in your wall. A common DIY error is accidentally drilling, nailing or screwing things into cables hidden inside your walls. A quality cable detector can help you to track buried cables before you start work and avoid the risk of an electric shock.
2. Use an RCD (residual current device). An RCD can save your life by cutting off the power in the event of an electrical fault caused by a DIY blunder. Make sure you have one fitted in your fusebox (consumer unit), and where necessary use a plug-in RCD.

3. Shut off the power. If you're doing any work near electrical wiring or power supplies, where possible, shut off the power in your fusebox and use battery powered tools. To be sure that power is off before beginning DIY, plug an appliance into sockets and try switching on the lights.
4. Check power tools and watch out for the lead. Before using any power tools, check the lead and plug are in good condition. If you can see signs of damage (such as frayed wires) get the equipment repaired before using it. And watch out for the power lead at all times so you don't accidentally cut through or trip over it.
5. Get advice from a registered electrician. The best way to avoid any electrical problems in the home is to seek the advice of a professional. If you're not sure, don't DIY.

Find an electrician

If you need any electrical work done in your home, the best option is always to get a competent person to do the job for you.

You can easily find a registered electrician here.

Part P of the Building Regulations

Part P of the Building Regulations, the legal framework that covers householders who are having work done in their homes, states that work which is deemed more dangerous – such as in the bathroom, or the installation of a new circuit – must be undertaken or reviewed and signed off by a registered electrician.

A lot of electrical work in the home is notifiable – meaning that by law the local authority has to be informed of it, and it has to be certified by a registered electrician.

Find out more about electrical installation building regulations.