



## Safety switches save lives

A safety switch can help guard against an electrical tragedy in your home. 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.

Safety switches are available as permanently installed or 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 to be protected (including any extension leads).

Safety switches can be easily identified—they are the ones with a ‘test’ or ‘T’ button. Although safety switches are proven to prevent many serious electric shocks, they are not a substitute for proper electrical maintenance and safe practices.

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September 2010.

For more information

Visit [www.electricalsafety.qld.gov.au](http://www.electricalsafety.qld.gov.au)  
or telephone 1300 650 662.

## What should I do?

It is not against the law to purchase electrical accessories or appliances that need to be hard wired, but they must be installed by a licensed electrical contractor.

Contact details for electricians 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).

## Making sure it works

To make sure you are getting maximum protection from your safety switch, you should regularly test the switch according to the manufacture’s directions. A good rule of thumb is to test safety switches every three months. 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.

Electrical Safety Office

# Electrical safety and you

Your responsibilities and the law

Tomorrow’s Queensland: strong, green, smart, healthy and fair

# Electrical Safety

**Even if you think you know what you're doing, electrical work can be extremely dangerous.**

## Your responsibilities and the law

Unsafe or unlicensed electrical work is risky for whoever does the work as well as for the users or anyone else who comes into contact with it. The risks can include death, serious injury or major property damage caused by an electrical fire.

In the case of property damage, illegal electrical work may result in an insurer refusing to accept a claim.

## What is electrical work?

Under the *Electrical Safety Act 2002*, electrical work includes the manufacturing, constructing, installing, testing, maintaining, repairing, altering, removing, or replacing of electrical equipment.

In Queensland, it is illegal for unlicensed people to perform electrical work. **Significant penalties of up to \$48,000 can apply to individuals.** Even if you think that you know what you are doing, 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.

Other work such as replacing a drive belt in a washing machine, cutting openings for air-conditioning units or fitting, but not connecting, an electric wall oven in a kitchen cabinet are not regarded as electrical work under the legislation.

However, electrical risks such as damage to, or contact with, wiring contained within wall cavities need to be considered and controlled particularly when cutting holes or driving screws or nails into walls.

## What is electrical equipment?

Electrical equipment is more than just appliances. There are two main types found in homes or small businesses. These are electrical accessories and fixed-wired electrical appliances.

The following lists give an indication of the types of products that could be found in each category.



## Electrical accessories

- junction boxes
- plugs
- light switches
- extension cords
- light fittings without a cord
- power boards
- power points

## Fixed wired electrical appliances

- ceiling fans
- split system air conditioners
- some light fittings
- stoves and ovens

