

## HOW DOES A SAFETY SWITCH WORK?

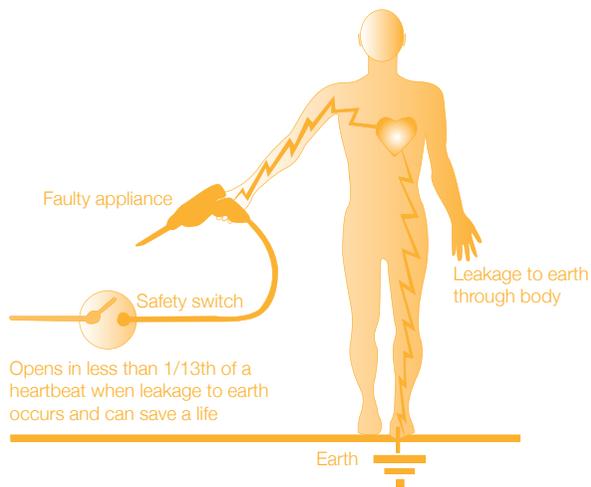
It is easy to forget that our everyday appliances can cause us harm. Faulty wiring, faulty appliances or accidents with electricity can be fatal.

When you get an electric shock, electricity usually flows through your body to earth. It can flow through your heart, interfering with the electric impulses which keep it beating, causing the heart to stop.

But how can you monitor an electrical current you cannot see, or watch every member of your family with every appliance in the house?

A safety switch monitors the flow of electricity through a circuit. It detects a problem as soon as the current leaves the circuit, and turns the power off within 0.03 of a second.

That's quick enough to help save your life, and help prevent costly fires or damage to your property.



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## ELECTRICAL SAFETY SAFETY SWITCHES SAVE LIVES



## SAFETY SWITCHES SAVE LIVES

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Is there a safety switch installed in your home?  
Is your family protected against serious injury, electric shocks or even electrocution due to possible faulty appliances and faulty or deteriorated wiring?

If the answer is no, then you should think very seriously about installing a safety switch. And, do it now.

Installing a safety switch is really quite easy and relatively inexpensive considering the protection it can provide.

### Can you ever put a price on safety and peace of mind?

In Victoria, it is mandatory for safety switches to be installed on both the power and lighting circuits in new properties – and older properties when extensive renovations are carried out.

If it's important to have safety switches in new homes, then it makes a good deal of sense to install them in older properties too.

More than 60% of Victorian homes have safety switches installed. Victoria's independent energy safety authority, Energy Safe Victoria (ESV) does not believe the figure is high enough to ensure protection for Victorian families.

Basically, electricity provides all the comforts and entertainments we enjoy in our homes. But electricity can be dangerous and should always be treated with care and respect.

Today, we make many more demands on the electrical installation in our homes than previously. We are tempted to install the very latest in labour saving devices and also a large number of entertainment systems.

Can the wiring systems in our homes cope with all these extra, high tech appliances? How do we know that the wiring systems are not deteriorating and therefore faulty? Are all the appliances in our home safe – the old ones and the new?

Before you find out the hard way – through a serious electrical incident – install a safety switch.

## ARE THERE DIFFERENT TYPES OF SAFETY SWITCHES?

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### There are three types of safety switches.

Switchboard mounted safety switches provide efficient protection for your entire home. All power and lighting circuits in your home can be protected. These safety switches are installed by registered electrical contractors or licensed electricians generally in the same location as your meter and circuit breakers or fuses.



ESV strongly recommends that a safety switch is installed on each of the power and lighting circuits for maximum protection and flexibility if a fault occurs.

In most cases a registered electrical contractor can install a safety switch for around \$200.

Power outlet safety switches are designed to protect a single electrical circuit in a part of your home. To give maximum protection, a power outlet safety switch must be installed by a registered electrical contractor or licensed electrician on the first power point of each circuit after the switchboard.



Plug in safety switches are portable so that they can be taken outside, or in areas where you don't usually use electricity. This means whenever you're using electricity you can take your own safety with you. These safety switches only protect the appliance which is plugged into them. They plug directly into a power outlet, providing protection whenever a power extension cord is used with a power tool, or in high risk situations such as outdoors and in damp locations such as around swimming pools. Portable safety switches are available from all major hardware or electrical retailers.

## HOW DO I ARRANGE TO INSTALL SAFETY SWITCHES?

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Switchboard mounted or power outlet safety switches must be installed by a registered electrical contractor or licensed electrician, who will issue a certificate of electrical safety for your assurance. All you have to do is to contact a registered electrical contractor to arrange for the work to be carried out. You may wish to shop around between registered electrical contractors to get the best price.

There are two important points to remember:

- Ask to see the licence of the electrician who comes to install the safety switch; and,
- Make sure you receive a certificate of electrical safety when the job is finished.

**Please note** Even with safety switches you must still take care with electricity. While they save lives in most situations they cannot do so in all cases.

## ARRANGE A HOME SAFETY INSPECTION

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As part of your decision to ensure that your home is safe and after your safety switch or switches have been installed, you should consider arranging an inspection of the electrical installation and wiring in your home by an ESV approved and registered Home Safety Inspector. For further information and the names of the registered Home Safety Inspectors, contact ESV. See below.

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