

SAFETY SWITCH FACT SHEET



What is the legislation regarding Safety Switch installation?

The law says **all homes built since 1992 must have safety switches installed on power circuits**. They are not an optional extra!

All new homes built **must** have a safety switch installed on **both** power and lighting circuits.

The law also says that if someone buys a property without a safety switch, the property owner **must install** a safety switch for the power circuits **within three months of a property transfer**. This applies to any transfer of domestic premises including estate, family law and mortgagee transfers.

If selling a property, first establish whether a safety switch is installed for power circuits. This must be declared on the standard sales contract and Form 24 Property Transfer.

From 1 March 2008, owners of leased domestic residences must have a safety switch installed for the power circuit of the residence after a residential tenancy agreement has been entered into.

What is a safety switch?

Safety switches are an insurance against electric shock. They are designed to prevent injury or death.

They monitor the flow of electricity through a circuit. They automatically shut off the electricity supply when current is detected leaking from faulty switches, wiring or electrical appliances. This stops the chance of current flowing to earth, through a person, electrocuting them.

Installing a safety switch is an inexpensive safety measure that protects everyone.

Are safety switches failsafe?

Nothing is failsafe. Safety switches should be regularly checked. Just like a smoke detector or other safety device, if it is not working properly, it cannot protect.

It is also important to make sure electrical appliances, electrical wiring, extension leads and other electrical equipment are regularly checked and kept in good working order.

How do I know if a safety switch is installed?

Check by looking at the switchboard for a TEST/RESET button. That tells you if there is a safety switch installed. When you open the switchboard you should see something like this:



Typical switchboard – this shows the main switch, safety switch with test button, and four circuit breakers.

All homes have circuit breakers or fuses. These are designed to protect the wiring and appliances within the premises. Only safety switches are designed to protect people.

Testing a safety switch

To test a safety switch, simply press the TEST button.

This should automatically trip the switch to the 'off' position.

Reset by pushing the switch back to 'on'.

If it doesn't work, contact your electrical contractor immediately.

Carry out safety switch test every three months.

Why did it 'trip'?

If a safety switch turns off the power, it may be that a resident could be using a faulty appliance or the electrical wiring may have become faulty.

Reset the safety switch. If it trips again, unplug the last appliance used. If everything works okay, take that appliance to a licensed electrical contractor to be checked.

If the safety switch keeps tripping, disconnect all appliances and plug them in, one at a time, until the faulty one is located.

Avoid touching appliances while carrying out this process.

[Contact your electrical contractor](#) if problems persist.

How do I get a safety switch?

Electrical work is never a do-it-yourself job! That's dangerous and illegal.

Only a licensed electrical contractor can install a safety switch.

Contacts:

- Your Property Manager
- [Your local electrical contractor](#) (non-Queensland Government link)
- [Electrical and Communications Association](#) (non-Queensland Government link) on 1300 657 488
- [Energex Ltd](#) (non-Queensland Government link) on 13 12 53

[Check if your electrician is licensed](#) with the Electrical Safety Office to perform this type of work.

What about lighting?

Retrospective fitting of safety switches on existing lighting circuits is not compulsory but will increase your family's safety.

Consider at least a portable safety switch if you are using decorative lights.