

# The risk is real.

## One safety switch may not be enough.



# Playing it safe with safety switches

Electrical safety is something that you should never take for granted. Safety switches protect you, your family and anyone visiting your home from electric shock. They turn off the power in a fraction of a second if a leakage of current is detected. This can happen if there is a faulty power point or electrical appliance or you accidentally hit a live cable while drilling into a wall.

## I have a safety switch – isn't one enough?

Even if your home has a safety switch installed, one may not be enough to protect you from electric shock. A safety switch only protects you if it's on that circuit. You should consider having safety switches installed on all circuits in your home, including power points, lights, air conditioning, oven, hot water and pool equipment circuits, even if they are on a separate tariff.



## Know your safety switches

To see if you have safety switches installed at your home, look inside your switchboard for a 'Test' or 'T' button near the circuit breakers. The test buttons can be various colours and range in size and shape. They could also be labeled 'Safety switch', 'ELCB' or 'RCD'. If you are unsure, have your electrician check which circuits are protected.



# Safety switches vs circuit breakers

Safety switches are often confused with circuit breakers and fuses, but they perform different tasks. Safety switches monitor the flow of electricity through a circuit and turn off the power in a fraction of a second if a leakage of current is detected. Safety switches provide personal protection against electric shock.

Circuit breakers protect an electrical circuit by quickly cutting power when there is a high current fault or overload that may cause a hazard.



## Testing safety switches

Test your safety switches every three months to ensure they are working properly.

Follow these simple steps:

- Let everyone know you are about to test your safety switches, especially if they're using a computer or recording something on TV – the testing process will cut power to those circuits connected to the safety switch.
- At the switchboard, press the 'T' or 'Test' button located on the safety switch. If it flicks off and cuts the power, it is working. Check to see which lights or appliances are now off – these are protected by the safety switch. If it has not cut the power to the connected circuit then you are no longer protected and you should talk to your licensed electrician as soon as you can.
- After testing, turn the safety switch back on. Depending on the safety switch type, push it back upwards or twist it into the 'on' position. For circuits with a refrigerator or air conditioner, wait for two to three minutes before resetting to avoid possible appliance damage.




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## Call your electrician to see if your home is safe.

For more information, visit:

[electricalsafety.qld.gov.au](http://electricalsafety.qld.gov.au)

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