

ELECTRICITY SAFETY



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Electricity is usually a very safe household energy to use, although as with other types of energy there are some safety issues that you should be aware of.

There are times when a fault or emergency will occur with your electricity supply. This leaflet has been designed with some useful tips on what to do if you have an electrical problem or accident. It also explains what to do in the event of an emergency and contains important phone numbers.

Please read this leaflet carefully and keep it handy just in case you should ever need to follow any of the safety procedures described within it.

What to do in the event of an electrical accident

Contact with electricity can cause a range of injuries including burns, breathing failure and heart failure.

The extent of the injuries will depend on the strength of the voltage and current, how long the person was exposed to it and how well the person was insulated between the electricity source and the ground (for example, whether they were standing on a wooden surface or wearing rubber soled shoes).

Important

If the injured person is still in contact with a live electrical source do not touch them. First switch the power off, or if this is not possible, use a wooden broom handle to push them free.

**Call an ambulance immediately
Dial 111**

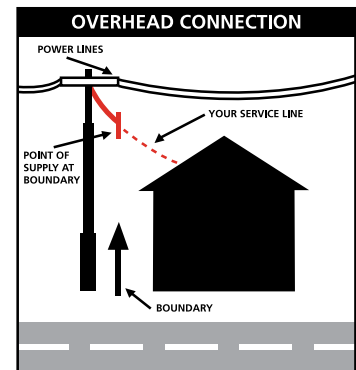
YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

All electricity customers have certain responsibilities relating to electricity services and electricity supply equipment ('electricity supply equipment' includes the service mains, wires, equipment, meters and any other assets relating to the supply of electricity).

Customers' responsibilities for electricity supply equipment include:

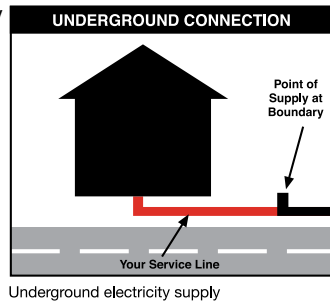
- Any repairs and/or maintenance that may be needed to your own meter box or meter board and any fuse board or other wiring.
- Ensuring all electricity supply equipment and appliances on your property comply with all relevant legal and network connection requirements.
- Repairs and maintenance to all electrical supply equipment and appliances that are located past the electricity point of connection on your property.
- All electricity past the meter and electricity services past the point of connection on your property.
- Maintaining the clearances between your service main and any building on your property, the ground and trees, as required by law, your supplier and any network operator. If you do not maintain these clearances after being asked to do so, you will be liable for the costs of maintaining these clearances or any repairs that result from the clearances not being maintained.

These diagrams show who owns which part of your electricity supply wires on your premises. Please note that in addition to your responsibilities shown on the diagrams the responsibility for maintaining all of the electrical wiring after the electricity meter is yours.



ELECTRICITY SAFETY

It is easy to take electricity for granted. Electricity is safe, versatile and economic to use. We plug appliances in and switch them on and off many times each day but familiarity can lead to accidents, so please read through the following DOs and DON'Ts to ensure you and your family stay safe.



DO

- Know where your electrical main switch is and familiarise yourself with the layout of your fuse board including the rating of your fuses and/or circuit breakers.
- Keep a note of our phone number and that of the electricity network operator in case you need to contact us, or them in an emergency. You can find both our number and that of the network operators at the back of this leaflet.
- Keep electrical appliances dry and clear of water, both inside and outside.
- Make sure your hands are dry when touching electrical appliances and sockets.
- Keep appliance cords away from where children can pull on them.
- Teach your children about the dangers of electricity.
- Use plastic socket protectors when you have young children.
- Check there are no worn, broken or loose parts before you plug an appliance in or switch it on.
- Always follow the manufacturer's instructions including any warning labels.
- Check flex or cords when uncoiled for any damaged or exposed wires, or frayed or split leads. Dispose of any damaged leads or have them professionally repaired.
- Before unplugging an appliance or removing an extension cord, turn off the switch at the main socket outlet.

- Supervise children when they are using electrical appliances, especially toasters, heaters and fans.
- Replace cracked or broken power sockets or plug tops.
- Remember that heaters can be a fire hazard and should be kept at least 1 metre away from curtains, sofas, beds and chairs.
- Always use a registered electrical worker
- Treat all electricity lines as live at all times.

Always use a registered electrical worker for all changes to your electrical installation

DON'T

- Overload power points by using too many plugs in one socket.
- Remove plugs from sockets by pulling on the cord.
- Let young children plug in or remove appliances from power sockets.
- Leave metal objects such as screwdrivers around where children may place them in power sockets.
- Use damaged appliances, or appliances with frayed leads or loose parts.
- Wash electrical equipment or appliances, even if unplugged. Just wipe them over with a dry cloth.
- Use portable electrical appliances in the bathroom or around water.
- Use bulbs in light fittings that exceed the recommended wattage for the fitting or the shade.
- Use electrical appliances for other than their intended use for instance don't use heaters as clothes dryers or ovens as heaters.
- Try to fix a problem with an electrical appliance when it is still plugged in, for instance if the toast gets stuck in the toaster turn it off and unplug it before you try to get the bread out of the toaster.

Don't try to carry out electrical repairs yourself – always use a registered electrical worker.

ELECTRICITY SUPPLY INTERRUPTIONS

Your electricity supply can be interrupted for a number of reasons including electrical faults, adverse weather conditions and disconnections.

What to do if your electricity supply is interrupted

Check to see if neighbouring houses and streets have lighting – if your neighbours are without lights and streetlights aren't on, it is likely that there is a power cut to your area, town or city.

General power cuts to an area, town or city are usually picked up quickly. However you should report any problems with your electricity supply to us as soon as possible. Your local network operator will begin working on fixing the problem as soon as it is reported.

If you live in a remote or rural area, call us to ensure that the fault affecting you has been recorded.

If there is a fault you should turn off electrical appliances such as heaters and stoves that may present a fire hazard. Some appliances such as computers can also be damaged when the power comes back on if they are switched on.

What if only your house has no power?

If your power goes off suddenly and your neighbours' lights are still on the circuit breaker on your fuse box may have tripped or your fuses may need changing.

If your fuse box appears to be in order you may have a fault in the supply to your premises. Call us, for help.

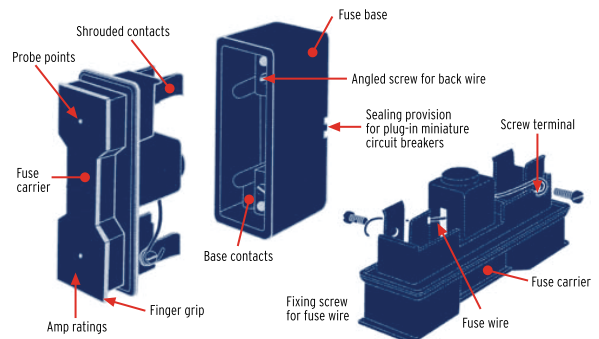
Always keep a torch handy in case there is a power cut. Take extreme care using candles.
NEVER LET CHILDREN USE CANDLES UNSUPERVISED.

CHANGING YOUR FUSES

If you are unsure of how to change fuses, call an electrician for advice or assistance.

It is a good idea to familiarise yourself with your fuse box before you need to change a fuse. The following tips may help in the changing of some types of fuses:

- Turn off the main electricity switch – this may be in the main fuse box or on a separate switch nearby.
- Check which circuits have failed. Open or take off the fuse box cover. Inside the lid, by each fuse or near the fuse box, there should be a list of the equipment or circuits each fuse controls (such as 5 amp lighting or 10 amp sockets). This will help you to check which fuse has blown. If you do not currently have a list of equipment or circuits for each fuse then you may wish to consider contacting your electrician and arranging for him to provide this for you.
- Look for scorch marks around the fuse carriers as this could point to the fuse that has blown. If there are no marks inspect each fuse wire in turn, removing one fuse carrier at a time and replacing it after inspection before checking the next fuse carrier.
- Switch off and unplug all appliances on the faulty circuit. If there are switches on the power points, turn them off. If a lighting circuit has failed, turn off all light switches – if you don't, the fuse is likely to blow again as soon as you turn the main switch back on.



PROTECTING YOUR EQUIPMENT FROM SPIKES OR SURGES

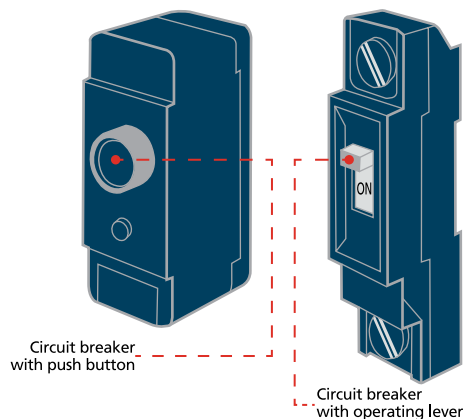
- *Replace the fuse carrier and turn on the main switch.*
- *Check all the appliances, lights and flexible cords that were in use on the circuit when it failed and have any equipment repaired if necessary before using this equipment again. Also check you are not over-loading the circuit with appliances as this is another cause of blown fuses.*
- *If the fuse still blows call an electrician.*

Never replace fuse wire with a bigger size wire as this can cause damage to wiring and possibly cause a fire

Checking Circuit Breakers

- *Look for the fuse where the lever is in the "off" position or where the button has popped out.*
- *Push the operating lever to the "on" position or push in the button on the circuit breaker.*
- *If the circuit breaker continues to trip, switch off and unplug all appliances on that circuit breaker. Turn off all switches at power points.*
- *If the circuit breaker continues to trip call a registered electrician.*

CIRCUIT BREAKERS



Electricity spikes and surges cause rapid fluctuation in power supplies. They can be caused by a number of reasons including lightning strikes, by trees touching or falling on power lines or by neighbouring large-scale users switching equipment on and off. Switching major electrical equipment on and off can also cause some electrical surges around the home.

To eliminate the possibility of any damage caused by spikes or surges we recommend that you consider installing surge protection for the following equipment and appliances:

- *computers, especially if you use a modem*
- *stereo equipment*
- *television and video equipment*
- *cordless phones*
- *washing machines and dishwashers*
- *any other expensive electronic equipment*

The amount of protection you need depends on the sensitivity, importance and value of the equipment. Equipment with more features and controls typically has more sensitive components and requires more sophisticated protection.

There are three kinds of filter you can use to protect equipment from spikes and surges:

- *a phone filter will prevent spikes and surges travelling into your appliances through phone sockets*
- *a power filter will prevent spikes and surges travelling into your appliances through power points*
- *a power/phone filter provides an overall level of protection, preventing spikes and surges travelling through both phone sockets and power points.*

IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Filters can be purchased from your local electrical store

We also recommend that you check your Home and Contents insurance policies. Insurance cover can be purchased for damage or loss suffered due to failure, interruptions or fluctuations in your electricity supply. Simply talk to your insurance agent or company for more information.

Protecting yourself with Residual Current Devices (RCDs), or Isolating Transformers

Use RCDs in your electrical installations to provide you with protection against injury from electric shock. Fuses or circuit breakers do not provide this protection.

RCDs may be installed as a socket outlet to replace an existing outlet. Installed this way other outlets downstream of the RCD outlet may be similarly protected. Only an RCD-protected outlet may be installed in a bathroom. Portable RCDs are also available and it is possible to have an RCD installed on your switchboard to protect a number of circuits.

Always use an RCD (or an isolating transformer) when using portable electrical appliances such as power tools or electric lawn mowers.

Contact a registered electrician should you wish to install RCDs in your home.

WHO TO CONTACT

In the event of an emergency, dial 111.

In the event of a power cut, interrupted supply or fault, please call us and we will report the fault to your local network operator.

If you call us after 5 pm on a weekday or during the weekend your call will be answered by an automated attendant in our telephone system. Follow the instructions to report an emergency and you will be transferred to our after-hours service provider who will take the details of your emergency and report it.

Wanganui Gas	06 349 0909
Directenz	0800 567 777

If you see an electrical accident or notice faulty electricity supply equipment then please call us, or your local network operator, immediately.

NETWORK OPERATORS	
Powerco Limited (Taranaki, Wanganui and Manawatu)	0800 27 27 27
Electra Limited (Horowhenua)	0800 567 876
Unison Networks Limited (Central Hawkes Bay)	0800 286 476
United Networks (Wellington)	0800 948 100



Energy Direct NZ
179 St Hill Street
PO Box 32
Wanganui 4540

Tel: 06 349 0909

Fax: 06 349 4931

Freephone: 0800 567 777

Email: enquiries@energudirectnz.co.nz

Web: www.energydirectnz.co.nz <[http:// www.energydirectnz.co.nz/](http://www.energydirectnz.co.nz/)>