

Why Trust Anyone Else?

Seven Common Electrical Problems

Many homes are in great electrical shape, but when homeowners or non-licensed contractors try to make electrical modifications or repairs there can be issues. Here is just a sampling of the types of issues to look out for that are very common:

1. Improper wire junction or termination

Wherever wires meet or terminate, they must be properly connected or terminated with a wire nut and enclosed in a proper junction box.

2. Buried wiring

Buried wires should be approved for burial, such as a rigid conduit or UF cable which protects from impact and moisture. Metal conduit is occasionally used but PVC is more commonly used outdoors since it usually costs less and has better corrosion protection.

3. Ungrounded receptacles

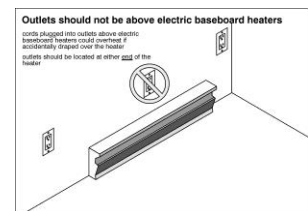
Sometimes homeowners replace a 2-wire receptacle with a 3-wire receptacle without upgrading the wiring properly. Either the receptacle should be changed back to reflect the proper wiring or the wiring should be upgraded to add the ground wire or a 3rd option is to install a GCFI receptacle if it is labeled "No Equipment Ground."

4. Missing wire clamps

Wherever wires enter a junction box or appliance they need to be protected from abrasion or damage with a wire clamp to hold the wiring in place so it does not touch the metal.

5. Electric baseboard heaters installed under a receptacle

Electric baseboard heaters should never be installed below an electrical receptacle. The danger is that something plugged into the receptacle when unplugged could easily dangle down into the baseboard heater and cause shock or fire hazard.



6. Unprotected Romex (proper term is Non Metallic Sheathed or NM cable). Romex (NM) wiring must be properly supported and there are many rules on how it is run for protection. Most homeowners do not have any idea what is correct and it is often improperly installed

7. Garbage disposals are not allowed to be wired with Romex (NM Cable). They must be wired with armored cable (often termed BX) or flexible cord and plug. The main reason is that Romex is solid copper wire and if it is disturbed enough it will break from fatigue like a paper clip.

