

6 Renovations That Will Help Prevent Electrical Fires

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[According to data collected by Statistics Canada](#), 11% of house fires in Alberta are electrical. This is a scary number, and anyone can become a part of that statistic if their electrical system fails. But there's good news: there are ways you can prevent electrical fires. And you can implement them during your renovation.

1. Get Arc Fault Circuit Interrupter (AFCI) Outlets Installed

If your wiring was installed before 2002, chances are you don't have AFCIs. Currently it's code to have AFCIs in your bedroom, but we recommend them for all the circuits in your home.

Arc faults occur when there's unintentional contact between wires. This causes an arc, which generates heat that is so strong it burns materials around it.

AFCIs will cut power to the circuit if there's an arc fault. This not only helps prevent electrical fires, but gives you notice that you may have old wires, worn out insulation around your wires, or another electrical problem that needs to be tended to right away.

2. Get Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter (GFCI) Outlets Installed

Ground faults are a little different than arc faults. They occur when electricity is pushed off its regular route and through a person instead. That's right - electrocution.

GFCIs are responsible for continuously monitoring electrical input and output, and will shut off a circuit if it poses a shock risk to a homeowner. These should be installed where there's water, as those



areas pose a greater risk. Think kitchens, bathrooms, and basements.

3. Have Old Wiring Inspected and New Wiring Installed by a Professional

Professional contractors and electricians advise an in-depth inspection every four years. A lot can change in that time, and you have no idea what's really going on behind those walls.

A renovation is a perfect time to have an electrical evaluation completed.

Depending on what the electrician finds, you may need some new wiring. Companies like [Sun Solar & Electrical Ltd. have renovation rewiring services](#) that will have your home safe and sound as quickly as possible.

4. Add More Outlets

Older homes may have a lot of personality, but they don't always have that many electrical outlets. Or those electrical outlets are in the most inconvenient places for your needs.

When you begin renovating, ask yourself what's going to be happening in your new space. Are you going to have a huge media centre that makes all your friends super jealous? Are you creating a kitchen that will finally enable you to use your standing mixer, blender, and food processor?

Whatever you're doing, you should plan to include more outlets. Overloaded outlets are dangerous and unfortunately very common. Ask yourself: How many power bars are you using right now?

This is bad for your electrical system, and increases your chances of an electrical fire.

Plan to talk to your contractor about adding more outlets. In the meantime, unplug anything you aren't using. This will ease the strain on your electrical system, and actually cut down on phantom power use, which is good for your wallet.

5. Ask About Upgrading Your Electrical Panel

Do your lights flicker when you use the coffee maker? Are you constantly blowing fuses and tripping breakers?

Your electrical panel may be to blame. Depending on the age and size of your current electrical panel, it may not be able to handle the demand of your lifestyle, particularly if you've recently added new appliances.

Ask a qualified contractor about your current electrical panel, and whether it should be upgraded during your renovation.

6. Upgrade Your Appliances

Our appliances and electronics are pretty much a part of the family at this point. Many of our appliances have nice long lifespans, and work perfectly well. You may not feel the need to upgrade.

But some appliances wear out faster than others, and continuing to use them puts you and your home in danger. If any of your appliances have worn cords, or they trip a circuit breaker often, stop using them immediately.

Renovations are a great time to upgrade, even if your appliances are still in working condition. Technology today is far different than technology from 10 years ago, making your home more energy-efficient (and cost-effective) than ever. Plus, you deserve some shiny new things.

Remember: Major appliances like your refrigerator should *never* be plugged into power strips. They aren't made to handle that load.

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