

New Homeowner's Electrical Safety Checklist

A room-by-room guide to what's worth checking in your first year, and what actually needs a licensed electrician versus a five-minute fix.

1. Find and Understand Your Breaker Panel

- ☐ Locate your panel (garage, basement, or a hallway closet) and make sure it's easy to access, not blocked by storage.
- ☐ Confirm every breaker is labeled. If they're not, label them, it matters the day something trips.
- ☐ Note the panel's age and brand. If your home is older, this is worth checking against known problem panel brands before you assume it's fine.
- ☐ Know how to safely reset a tripped breaker: fully OFF, then back to ON.

2. Outlet and GFCI Safety

- ☐ Confirm GFCI (Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter) outlets are present in kitchens, bathrooms, garages, and any outdoor outlets.
- ☐ Test each GFCI outlet monthly using the TEST and RESET buttons on the outlet itself.
- ☐ Check whether outlets are two-prong (ungrounded) or three-prong (grounded), especially in homes built before the 1960s.
- ☐ Look for outlets that feel warm, spark, or have visible scorch marks. Stop using them and call an electrician.

3. Warning Signs That Mean Call an Electrician, Not a DIY Fix

None of these are emergencies to panic over, but none of them are things to wait on either.

- ☐ A burning or "hot plastic" smell from an outlet, switch, or the panel itself.
- ☐ A breaker that trips repeatedly, even right after resetting it.
- ☐ Flickering or dimming lights that aren't tied to a storm or outage.
- ☐ Buzzing or crackling sounds from outlets, switches, or the panel.
- ☐ Visible knob-and-tube wiring (ceramic knobs/tubes, cloth-covered wire) in an unfinished attic or basement.

4. Extension Cords and Space Heaters

- ☐ Treat extension cords as temporary. If something's plugged in permanently, it needs a real outlet, not a cord.
- ☐ Never run a space heater through an extension cord or power strip, plug it directly into the wall.
- ☐ Give space heaters 3 feet of clearance from anything flammable, and never leave one running unattended.

5. Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Detectors

- ☐ Test every smoke and CO detector in the home. If you don't know when it was last tested, test it now.
- ☐ Replace batteries at least once a year (an easy rule: do it when you set clocks back in the fall).
- ☐ Replace the entire unit every 10 years, batteries alone don't fix a detector past its lifespan.

Have an electrical issue? We answer the phone and show up when we say we will.

(816) 786-8307 | ateamelectrickc.com

Licensed & Insured · Master Electrician · Same-Day Service · 24/7 Emergency Availability
Serving Kansas City, Gladstone, Liberty, Independence, and Lee's Summit

This checklist covers common items and general best practice. It isn't a substitute for a full electrical inspection, and every home is different.