

New stats reveal DIYers prone to faulty electrical work

It happens all year round. Independent-minded Ontarians make pilgrimages to local hardware stores in search of shiny new tools and equipment to undertake home electrical repairs. They associate little risk with electrical work, and have little knowledge or experience.

For many of these do-it-yourselfers (DIYers), performing household repairs or renovations is thought to be an easy task, and an obvious way to save money. Yet recent statistics show many DIYers put themselves, their families, and their properties in peril because they don't understand the risks associated with doing electrical work.

Data gathered by Ontario's Electrical Safety Authority (ESA) reports that DIYers' attempts at doing electrical work often result in potentially hazardous situations.

According to the numbers, 89 per cent of electrical deficiencies identified in work done by DIYers are associated with the most common type of DIY installation: electrical outlets, fixtures and devices. A further 77 per cent of defects found in DIY work are associated with wiring methods, and 30 per cent are associated with grounding and bonding and faulty service or panel work.

"Electrical work should be left to professionals," says Lucy Impera, ESA's Registrar of Licensing and Certification. "While attempting your own repairs might seem cost-effective in the short-term, if done incorrectly they may lead to additional unanticipated expenses and dangers."

Last year, the ESA enacted provincial legislation requiring all electrical contracting businesses operating in Ontario to be licensed by the Electrical Safety Authority. The new law was intended not only to regulate the industry but to provide peace of mind to wary consumers concerned about the qualifications of available electrical contractors.

"Contrary to public perception, electrical work is complicated and our statistics show that many DIYers' don't have the knowledge to do this work properly," says Impera. "For peace of mind, only hire Licensed Electrical Contractors to do wiring work on your property as they have the skills and experience needed to ensure safe electrical installations."

Go to www.pluginsafely.ca for a list of Licensed Electrical Contractors in your area.