

Electrical snagging: safe visual checks and documents

What a homeowner may observe and when to use a competent electrician

PART OF THE CHECKSURE HOMEOWNER KNOWLEDGE BASE



Buying a new home



Handover



Snagging



Warranties



Home maintenance



Heating and ventilation



Electrical safety



Gardens



Building standards



Connectivity



Energy efficiency



General advice

The short answer: limit homeowner checking to visible condition and ordinary user controls. Loose accessories, burning smells, exposed parts, repeated tripping or damaged cables need prompt attention. Plug-in indicators and switch-on checks do not replace the electrical installation certificate, formal testing or diagnosis by a competent electrician.

CheckSure's Homeowner Knowledge Base draws on practical experience of building, inspecting and resolving defects in new homes. Our aim is to explain what homeowners should reasonably expect, what may require further investigation and what steps they can take next.



Figure 1. A functional indication never replaces certification or formal electrical testing.

Documents to collect

- The Electrical Installation Certificate and schedules supplied for the new installation.
- Consumer-unit labels and circuit information.
- Instructions for alarms, controls, EV charging and renewable-energy equipment.
- Commissioning and registration evidence for included specialist systems.

Safe visual observations

- Socket, switch and control plates are secure, undamaged and neatly finished.
- Cables, covers and accessories do not expose live parts.
- Ordinary switches and supplied controls respond when power is available.
- The consumer unit is accessible, labelled and visibly complete.
- Smoke, heat and carbon-monoxide alarms are present as documented and respond to the approved user-test control.

What a plug-in indicator can and cannot do

Some trained inspectors use a suitable plug-in tester to obtain a limited indication at a socket. It does not prove the installation is fully safe, confirm every protective measure or replace certification. The

inspection method determines whether and how socket checks are recorded. Homeowners should not try to diagnose wiring with a low-cost plug-in device.

Warning signs

Stop using affected equipment and seek prompt help for overheating, scorch marks, buzzing, burning smells, repeated tripping, electric shocks, water near electrical parts, loose accessories or visible damaged conductors. Do not repeatedly reset a protective device without understanding why it operated.

Alarms and life-safety systems

Use the manufacturer's test control; never use flame, smoke, exhaust gas or improvised aerosol. An unusual alarm position cannot be judged from a generic diagram alone. The approved design, alarm category, home layout and manufacturer instructions matter.

Changes after completion

Do not remove accessories or alter fixed wiring to investigate a snag. In England, some electrical work is notifiable under the Building Regulations. Fixed-installation work should be designed, installed and tested by a competent person; requirements differ elsewhere in the UK. Preserve certificates for future warranty, insurance and sale records.

Key takeaways

- Collect certification and circuit information at handover.
- Restrict homeowner checks to safe visual and ordinary-control observations.
- A plug-in indicator is not an electrical safety certificate.
- Use a competent electrician for faults, testing and fixed-wiring changes.

EXPLORE FURTHER Explore the CheckSure Homeowner Knowledge Base for related guidance on buying, inspecting and looking after a new home. Please visit checksure.co.uk/knowledge-base/

Sources & References

Electrical Safety First — Advice for homeowners: <https://www.electricalsafetyfirst.org.uk/guidance/>

UK Government — Approved Document P: electrical safety: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/electrical-safety-approved-document-p>

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