



Home Inspector Tip sheets

Electrical Inspection Room-by-Room Cheat Sheet

General Guidelines

Electrical codes are in place to protect you, the homeowner. These general guidelines apply to new installations and will give you the basics of what electrical inspectors are looking for. Be sure to check with your local electrical inspector because local codes may vary from the list provided. In the case of existing housing, the codes will apply if you are updating a home, and it requires an electrical update. It is also suggested that you update if the wiring in your home is unsafe and a danger to your family.



Bathrooms

Bathrooms use a lot of power and may need more than one circuit. Mainly, because you may have a curling iron, razor, hairdryer, and the combination light, fan, and heater all running at the same time. The combination fan, light, and heater should have its own 20-amp circuit. Likewise, the outlet should have its own 20-amp circuit. All outlets in bathrooms should be GFCI's. Light fixtures should be covered with lenses or globes and moisture resistant if placed in a shower or tub area.

Kitchen

A kitchen should have a separate circuit for each appliance with a motor. The microwave, refrigerator, garbage disposal, and dishwasher would be the major appliances included. Generally, the code requires that you install a minimum of two receptacle circuits in the area above the counter top. An electric range, cook top, or oven must be wired to a dedicated 240-volt circuit.

Living Room, Dining Room, and Bed Rooms

These rooms require that a wall switch be placed beside the entry door of the room so that you can light the room before entering it. It can either control a ceiling light, a wall light, or an outlet connected to a desk lamp. The ceiling fixture must be controlled by a wall switch and not a pull chain type light. Wall receptacles should be placed no farther than 12 feet apart. Dining rooms usually require a separate 20-amp circuit for one outlet used for a microwave, entertainment center, or window air conditioner.

Stairways

Special care is needed in stairways to ensure all of the steps are lighted properly. Three-way switches are required at the top and bottom of the stairs. If the stairs turn, you may need to add additional lighting to accommodate the area to be lit.

Hallways

These areas can be long and need adequate lighting. Be sure to place enough lighting so shadows are not cast when walking. Remember, hallways are often escape routes in the event of inclement weather and emergencies. A hallway over 10 feet long is required to have an outlet for general purpose. Three-way switches are required for the two ends of the hallway. If there are more doors throughout the hallway, say a bedroom or two, then you may want to add additional four-way switches to the circuit outside the door of each room.

Closets

Closets must have one globe covered fixture controlled by a wall switch. Exposed bulb fixtures, like pull-chain fixtures, get hot and come in contact with clothing or other combustible materials stored in closets. Although your existing home may have these fixtures, it is recommended that you change them for safety reasons.

Laundry Room

The washer and dryer should have its own 20-amp receptacle. In the case of an electric dryer, a separate 240-volt circuit should be installed.

Attached Garage

Inside the garage there should be at least one switch controlling the lighting. It is recommended that three-way switches be installed for convenience between the doors. This lighting should be in addition to any garage door lighting that you may have. Garages need a separate circuit for at least one outlet. This is generally required to be a GFCI outlet. You should check your local code to be sure. When in doubt, make it a GFCI. Any outside outlets connected must be either a GFCI outlet or an outlet connected to a GFCI breaker.

Remember that the electrical codes are in place for your safety. Although you may believe that they are overkill at times, these practices save lives everyday. When it comes to electric safety, don't become a statistic! Follow the rules of the codes and be sure to have your local electrical inspector give you the green light for the safety of your family's sake.

Article Source: <http://electrical.about.com/od/codesregulations/a/commoneleccodes.htm>