

MEDIA RELEASE

A timely warning for DIY enthusiasts: not all home improvement tasks are 'do-it-yourself'

Many Australians are putting the extra time at home to good use, tackling some of those home improvement projects they've been putting off. However there are some tasks that will always require the help of a licenced tradesperson.

National Electrical and Communications Association (NECA) CEO Suresh Manickam, says anecdotal reports of homeowners engaging in activity that should otherwise be done by a qualified tradesperson is great cause for concern.

"It is not only dangerous but illegal to undertake electrical installations and work. Despite all the time you may have on your hands and the temptation to get things done around the house, for your safety and that of your family, resist the urge to fix or install anything electrical and contact a local licensed electrical contractor.

"People underestimate how complex electrical work actually is - household electrical systems are far from simple with different circumstances requiring specific wiring, fittings and insulation that an unqualified person will not know.

"Homeowners don't need to take unnecessary risks. With the current restrictions in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, households can still access essential services including any necessary electrical work."

"Electricians remain open for business and are complying with the social distancing and hygiene guidelines, in line with the latest advice from government so any risks are eliminated or minimised," he said.

It is critical to remember to check for a valid electrical licence. A licensed electrical contractor who completes a home electrical installation is required by law to provide the owner with an electrical safety certificate, which guarantees any work has been completed safely.

Precautions to take when engaging an electrician or any tradesperson in your home:

- 1. Communicate ahead of time** – share information about the work required via mobile or video conferencing. Before agreeing to a tradesperson entering your home, ask if they have the required safety gear such as disposable gloves, shoe covers, and masks for protection.
- 2. Avoid physical contact** - when interacting, follow social distancing rules. Avoid shaking hands and remain at least 1.5 metres away.
- 3. Minimise time together** - leave the room and resist the urge to inspect what is being done unless absolutely necessary. Check the job once it has been completed.
- 4. Avoid cash transactions** – use contactless payment where possible. If cash is the only payment option available, try to have the exact amount ready to pay.
- 5. Clean up** - after the tradesperson has left your home, disinfect the area where the repairs were done, remembering to clean all surfaces including door handles and light switches.

Avoid home improvement activities that require engaging a tradesperson if you or someone in your household has:

- been diagnosed with COVID-19
- been suspected of having the COVID-19 virus or is awaiting results of whether they have the COVID-19 virus
- been, or have potentially been, exposed to a person who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 or is suspected to have COVID-19 (even if the person who is suspected to have COVID-19 has not yet been tested)
- travelled overseas recently; or
- had symptoms linked to COVID-19 such as fever, cough or shortness of breath.

ENDS

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Notes for editors

1. *NECA is the peak industry body representing the interests of electrical and communications contractors Australia-wide.*
2. *Membership comprises approximately 5,400 electrical contractors, employing in excess of 60,000 employees Australia wide.*
3. *NECA provides employment and ongoing skills development for over 4,500 apprentices Australia wide.*
4. *A selection of high-resolution electrical contractor and apprentice insitu images compliant to Standard AS/NZS 4836:2011 are available free by visiting the [NECA image library](#).*