



# Electrical Inspection Considerations

Your ministry serves as a gathering place for people who are typically using multiple electrical resources at one time. Electrical systems in your facility have the potential to be extremely dangerous and require regular maintenance. Older buildings may contain electrical systems that were not built to handle the demands of modern technology, and are at greater risk for fire and other electrical concerns. Regardless of the age of your building, it is critical to obtain regular safety inspections by a certified electrical contractor. Insurance Board offers the following considerations regarding benefits of electrical inspections and tips for your ministry.

## BENEFITS

- The main benefit of having an electrical inspection is that it will protect your congregation, employees and volunteers from harm.
- An electrical inspection will help ensure that all electrical systems meet safety requirements.
- The best way to save costs on electrical malfunctions at your church is to catch them before they occur.
- Electrical inspections can help decrease disruption to your ministry and increase efficiency.
- Avoid damage to irreplaceable items.

## TIPS FOR YOUR CHURCH

- Hire a professional and establish a maintenance schedule with a qualified electrical contractor. Make sure to keep a maintenance log detailing a record of inspection.
- Make sure the circuit breaker panel contains breakers that are the proper size for each system; if necessary, consider upgrading your electrical system.
- Do not overload circuits by having too many devices plugged in at one time; never alter plugs or adaptors to make them fit an outlet or extension cord.
- Make sure a qualified professional inspects your furnace or boiler and electrical systems on a regular basis.
- Never store combustibles or flammable items near the furnace or boiler.
- Remember to turn off electrical items that are not in use; electronic musical instruments or organs should also be powered off if they are not in use.
- Avoid using space heaters.
- Do not leave chargers plugged in if they are not in use.
- Regularly inspect all electrical devices and appliances at your church; immediately replace any item that overheats, sparks, smokes or causes shocks.
- Regularly check all smoke alarms to make sure they work properly; consider installing a sprinkler system and using an alarm system that will automatically notify emergency fire personnel if fire is detected.

# Electrical Warning Signs

Electricity is a modern convenience that can also be a potential hazard. For this reason, repairs and electrical work is always best left to professional electrical contractors. Be aware of how to identify warning signs that could cause a fire before it occurs. Early detection can help keep repair costs down and keep your congregation safe.

**Arc Faults** - Arc faults occur when an electrical circuit veers off its intended path. They are a frequent cause of electrical fires. However, arc faults are preventable through the installation of an [arc-fault circuit interrupter \(AFCI\)](#) which can be installed by a professional electrician.

**Odd Odors** An odd smell coming from an electrical outlet is concerning. Trip its circuit breaker so that you can safely unplug whatever may be plugged into the outlet. Call a qualified electrician to assess the situation immediately.

**Buzzing** Your outlets and switches should operate silently. If you hear any buzzing, cracking or sizzling sounds when you flip a switch or plug into an outlet, trip the circuit breaker and consult a qualified electrician immediately.

**Broken Light Switches/Loose Outlets** If switches or outlets stop working or work intermittently, it could be a sign of loose wiring which creates a potential for electrical shock and fire. Call a qualified electrician to assess the situation.

**Hot Fixtures** Occasionally check around your ceiling fixtures for warmth. Exceeding recommended bulb wattages can cause overheating. If fixtures are excessively warm, contact a qualified electrician immediately.

**Counterfeit Electrical Products** Purchase your electrical products from reputable dealers to ensure they are up to [industry or government standards](#), and always check to make sure the product has a seal from the [Underwriters Laboratory \(UL\)](#).

**Warm or Sparking Outlets and Switches** If your light switches are warm to the touch or an outlet is sparking, trip the circuit breaker and call a professional electrician immediately to assess.

**Flickering** Flickering lights usually indicate a power surge. The demands on the electrical system may be greater than it can handle. If flickering lights are a frequent occurrence, contact a qualified electrician.

**Rodents** Mice and rats love to chew on electrical wiring, and frayed or damaged wiring is a fire hazard. If you see droppings or other signs of rodent activity, call a qualified electrician to assess if there is any electrical damage. You will also want to address the rodent issue immediately.

**Circuit Breakers** Circuit breakers are designed to trip when a circuit is overloaded to help prevent overheating and fire hazards. If circuit breakers trip, call an electrician to assess your electrical system. Speak with a qualified electrician about installing [GFI or GFCI](#) (Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters) outlets in high moisture areas.