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Are DIY electrical repairs safe? by [Cesar Arzayus](#)

Article published on April 30th 2012 | [Home Improvement](#)

With all the Do-It-Yourself books, shows and websites out there, you may consider completing needed electrical repairs yourself instead of hiring a professional electrician. Sure, attempting to make the repairs can save you money. However, saving money doesn't compare to making costly electrical repair mistakes that could endanger you and/ or your family's or employees' safety. Even if you have a handyman or friend complete the repair, you still risk having major damage done to your property.

Examples of Costly Mistakes

Completing any electrical repair requires detailed knowledge. For instance, you may encounter a fuse that continuously blows after you reset or replace it. You decide to replace the breaker or fuse yourself. Most people think a fuse replacement is an easy job. If the fuse keeps blowing then it means it's time for a larger fuse that can handle the workload, right?

No. Replacing a fuse is a common do-it-yourself mistake with potentially damaging consequences. A larger fuse can overheat the wire and cause a fire. Besides, the reason why the fuse is blowing is due to a problem with the circuit wiring.

Another costly electrical repair mistake involves not respecting the age of your property. You may read home improvement books or watch televisions, but you can't ask questions. For instance, older properties have ground wires at the outlet locations and switches. While repairing an electrical problem, you may replace an outdated two prong outlet with a grounded outlet receptacle. It's a big, big mistake to do that. Your cover plate, if a short circuit occurs, could become energized and have deadly consequences.

Hidden Mistakes

Electricity is invisible. Thus, when you do something wrong, you may not know it until it's too late. For example, after you repair the problem, electricity could flow just like it would if an electrician completed the job. However, behind the walls a fire could be smoldering. Other dangers of hidden problems involve shock hazards or shorting circuits.

The Biggest Repair Danger

Many novice electricians often use the wrong wire size for their electrical repair. Electrical wire is sold in different thickness and gauges. If you use the wrong sized wire for your circuit, it can overheat and stop working before your circuit breaker has a chance to trip and indicate something is wrong. Since the circuit breaker and/ or fuses protect wires, you may damage your property so bad that you spend more money to fix the problem.

Breaking the Law

Houston and surrounding areas have electrical codes you must follow. Some of these codes prohibit property owners from completing an electrical repair job unless they are licensed. Thus, even if you were to successfully complete the needed repair, you're still breaking laws and could face serious trouble. If you don't think the city or insurance company may not find out, reconsider:

••••• If you sell your business or home, it won't pass code requirements once it's inspected

••••• If a fire or other damage happens at your home or business, your insurance company may refuse to pay for the damage.

••••• If you or someone is injured or hurt during or because of the electrical repair you completed, your insurance company may refuse to pay.

Consider getting the electrical repair completed by a licensed electrician. You'll know the:

••••• Works done right

••••• Electrician has insurance to cover any accidents or injury

••••• Correct equipment, tools and materials were used

Completing an electrical repair job isn't akin to painting a wall or changing a faucet. Working with electricity requires extensive electrical knowledge. The person completing repairs must be licensed.

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Article Keywords:

Electrician, Electrical repair, DIY Electrical, DIY Home, DIY Houston, DIY

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