

Old house electrical systems: Summary

House built before 1950

- If your house was built before 1950, chances are that “**knob and tube wiring**” is present.
- Knob and tube is not necessarily dangerous, but must be checked to confirm its safety.

House built 1950 to 1964

- If your home was built 1950 to 1964, chances are that it was wired with “**ungrounded cable**”.
- Ungrounded cable is similar to knob and tube, and can usually be made safe.

House built 1965 to 1975

- If your home was built 1965 to 1975, chances are that aluminum wiring is present.
- Homes with aluminum wiring are usually found at increased risk of fire.
- But with correct repair, houses with aluminum wiring can be made safe.

Older homes in general

- Older houses are more likely to have electrical fire hazards present than newer homes.
- Hazardous DIY work is sometimes present in older houses, putting house at increased risk of fire.
- Deterioration of the electrical system is sometimes found, putting house at increased risk of fire.
- Once the concerns are corrected, an old home can be equally as safe as a modern home.

Type	Common concerns	Solution
Pre 1950 Knob & tube	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Original 2-prong outlets swapped for modern 3-prong. As a result equipment requiring grounding is ungrounded. Not safe. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examination by an electrical consultant. GFCIs may provide the necessary ground protection for your modern outlets.
1950 to 1962 Ungrounded cables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same as knob and tube: Original 2-prong outlets swapped for modern 3-prong. As a result equipment requiring grounding is ungrounded. Not safe. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examination by an electrical consultant. GFCIs may provide the necessary ground protection for your modern outlets.
1965 to 1975 Aluminum wiring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Original outlets & switches for aluminum wiring swapped for modern outlets and switches, but not rated for aluminum. Not safe. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examination by an electrical consultant. Copper pigtailing is an excellent solution, if installed correctly.
Older homes in general	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deterioration to electrical service • Faults in the electrical panel due to age/tinkering • Add-on circuits (DIY work) hazardously installed • Build-up of debris in electrical boxes. Not safe. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examination by an electrical consultant. Your examiner will tell you correct steps to get your house safe.

What is PowerCheck?

- PowerCheck is a group of electrical consultants, all experts in electrical safety.
- PowerCheck examines your house thoroughly, looking for any electrical fire hazards.
- Your PowerCheck consultant conducts the examination without conflict of interest.
- Your house is described with a simple risk-rating, along with steps to get your house safe.

PowerCheck: 604 684-3630 (Vancouver) or 1-800-517-3630 (across Canada)

Winner of BC Lieutenant Governor Safety Award 2013