

## New home primer, Part 2

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One will say “Main.” That is the one to switch off if you see sparks, smell smoke, or someone throws a toaster in a bathtub full of water. Depending on your electrical layout, the main breaker panel may have a multitude of additional switches marked with their purpose, or a few larger switches marked as Sub A, Sub B and AC (Air Conditioner). These larger breakers mean you have another (Sub) panel somewhere inside the house with smaller breakers inside. It is very good to locate these boxes, and make sure you can access them when the power goes out in one area of the house.

The important thing to know about breaker switches is how to reset them. Most of the time the breaker switch will indicate it has popped when the switch is centered between On and Off. To reset the breaker, move the switch all the way to the Off position then back to On. If it pops again, go back into the house, and unplug any appliances that are near the outlet that is not working. Then try the switch again. If it continues to pop, leave it off until you or your handyman/electrician can locate the short in the circuit. Occasionally an older breaker will pop but the switch will not move back to center. If the power is out in one area of the house, and none of the breaker switches are at center, you will need to click each switch off and then back on to find the one that popped.

The electrical code requires that circuit breakers be labeled by purpose, (Lights, Plugs, Refrigerator, Disposal, Etc.). Some but not all electricians will conscientiously identify which switch controls what area of the house. However, you should never assume that the labels are correct. If you are working on circuit, always verify that the power is off at the junction box, despite what the breaker label says.

My fervent wish is for everyone to enjoy many trouble-free years in their new homes. But the dad in me says it doesn't hurt to be prepared for emergencies. You never know.

Jim Hurley is an independent handyman with over 25 years of experience in residential repairs. Hopefully this free advice is helpful to someone attempting Do-It-Yourself home repairs. The information presented is intended for informational purposes and for use by persons having appropriate technical skill, at their own discretion and risk.



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