

Older homes: High risk indicators

1. Homes with one or more suites

<u>If home has a suite, and suite is not confirmed a "legal suite", assume High Risk.</u> The vast majority of houses we see have a suite, and the suite was installed without permits. As a result, in most cases electrical fire hazards are abundant. Examples:

- Illegal electrical panel (power for the suite), hazardously installed
- Outlets and lights hazardously installed
- The hazards are also often due to the suite construction itself. E.g. panel located in a closet, or not accessible in case of emergency.

2. Homes over 40 years of age

If house over 40 years of age assume High Risk

Older houses require regular maintenance. In older homes it is most common to find the electrical system not maintained. As a result most older homes have fire hazards present due to lack of maintenance. Examples:

- Build-up of cobwebs in electrical boxes. Cobwebs are flammable. If there is a spark the cobwebs can easily ignite.
- Original circuit breakers faulty. If over 40 years they should be replaced.
- Loose electrical connections (due to age) are common, leading to sparks & fire.
- Outside: Original service conductor insulation deterioration. Very dangerous!

3. Homes with Aluminum wire (1966 to 1975)

If house built 1966 to 1975, assume aluminum. Therefore assume High Risk

Nearly all houses built **1966 to 1975** were wired with **aluminum**. The aluminum circuits are nearly always found to be in not safe condition. Causes:

- Modern "Decora" outlets and switches not rated for aluminum.
- Pigtailing of aluminum incorrectly done (incorrect wire connectors)

These concerns result in melted conductors & wire connectors. The aluminum can nearly always be made safe through correct copper pigtailing. But first wiring needs to be checked!

4. Houses with "Ungrounded wiring" (pre 1962)

If house built pre 1962, assume ungrounded. Therefore assume High Risk

Knob and tube was the first type of ungrounded wiring; used until ~1950. It was followed by ungrounded cable (called "NMD1") used until as late as 1962. Old wiring can usually be made safe without replacement, saving homeowners thousands of dollars. But first the wiring needs to be checked!

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