



RCDs save lives – amazing bits of kit

An RCD monitors the flow of electricity around your home and can switch off any electrical circuit should a dangerous situation arise. It could be one of your cables is wearing, a mouse chewing away in the loft or how about a baby trying to bottle feed the little holes in a socket?

This leaflet explains all about RCD's and what you can do to make sure they work effectively and provide protection for your family.

RCDs explained

Usually your RCD is a big switch in your fuse board but it can be next to the fuse board or situated somewhere else in your home. An RCD, or an RCBO on some fuse boards, is next to the all the circuit breaker switches or fuses and has an on/off switch and an important little plastic button with a 'T' embossed on it. An RCD tripping could be life saving. It's rather like the adapter you can plug the lawnmower into at the socket, so if you mow through the cable it will switch off before you get electrocuted. But an RCD is better as it

is protecting you on more than one socket. In modern homes there will be an RCD looking over everything electrical, or two, or three if you are lucky!

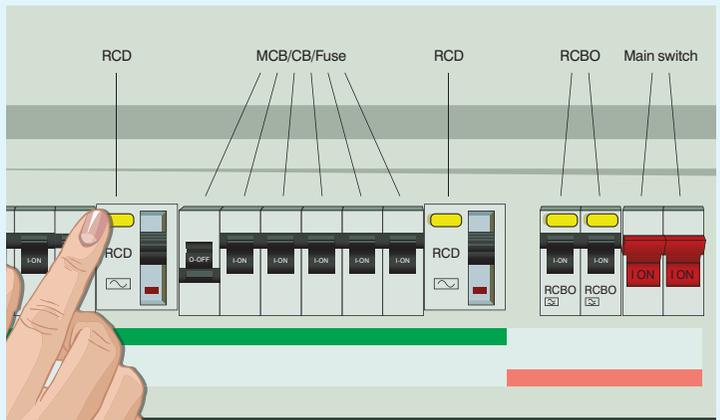
So you may have your electrician tell you that they can't put your new light up in the garden without installing an 'RCD'. It all sounds like a secret code designed to baffle you into spending money doesn't it? Well, in this case it isn't code and the term RCD is as worth hearing as the word *Lifeguard*.

So you already have an RCD – do you test yours?

Industry research shows that an overwhelming number of people are not testing their RCDs regularly. Go on, hit the button! Most homeowners do it with their smoke alarms, so make it a habit to do it with your RCDs too.

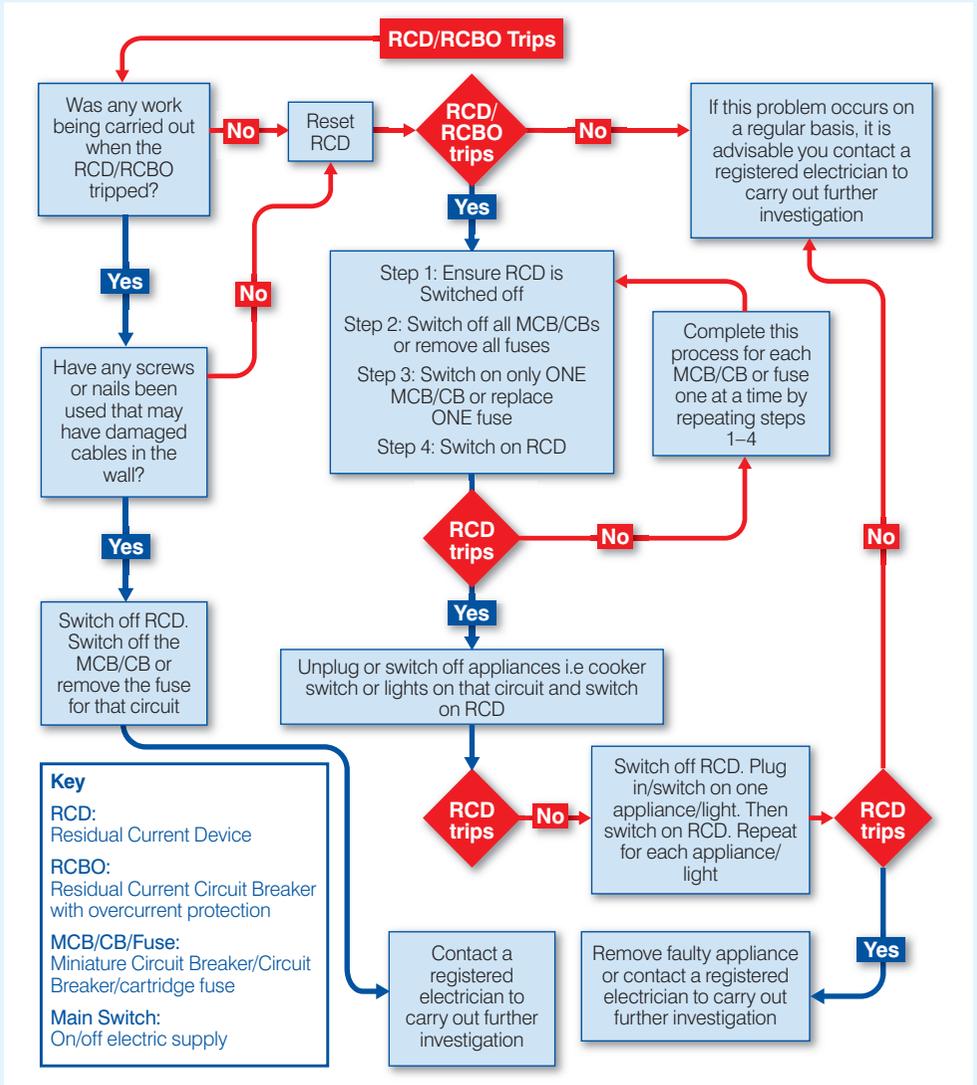
To test one, every three months, all you have to do is press the button with the 'T' on it. **Please be aware this will switch off power to your fridge, TV, computers and alarms etc.** The switch should ping down. If it doesn't, then it might not be working properly

and could be hiding all manner of fire and shock hazards. In which case, you may need to call a NAPIT registered electrician to test and inspect your home. To switch back on, just pull it all the way to the bottom (if it's not already at the bottom after it has pinged), and push it back up.



What to do if your RCD trips

If yours does trip, it might be something simple causing it so before calling your local NAPIT registered electrician to investigate there are some basic checks you can safely do yourself using this flowchart.



Important Trade Secret!

Don't just switch the sockets off, pull out the plugs. Nine times out of ten it is an old appliance that is causing the trip, so you might only need a new toaster and not an electrician. If that doesn't work then it is a fault finding mission for an electrician.

What do I need to do?

A NAPIT registered electrician can advise you on installing RCDs in your home and if improvements are required to maintain your safety in the event of an electrical fault occurring. They can carry out a full inspection of your household electrics, walk you through what to do if it ever trips and show you how to test it. You'll also get a set of certificates with all the test results on.

If you don't have an RCD, don't panic, your NAPIT registered electrician may well be able to put one in for you without changing the whole fuse board. However, a new fuse board is usually the best option, because you'll get more than one protective RCD providing more safety for you and your family.

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NAPIT can recommend a qualified electrician near you. Just call NAPIT on 0845 543 0330
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