

SAFETY CODES

Information Toolkit – Homeowners

Electrical Wiring Guide

(Includes 2018 Canadian Electrical Code amendments)

Updated – January 15, 2025

PLEASE NOTE: This document is only a guide. Other methods of installation may be acceptable but must meet the minimum requirements of the current Canadian Electrical Code.

Homeowners obtaining an electrical permit are required to have a basic knowledge of electrical wiring. Homeowners are **NOT** permitted to:

- install, alter or modify the main electrical service, including the main panel, main breaker or the meter base.
- install electrical wiring in permanent, in-ground swimming pools and hot tubs.
- install or alter solar photovoltaic systems.
- Find more information on our [website](#).

Required inspections

Homeowner permits may require a minimum of two inspections, rough-in and/or final.

- To schedule your inspection, You may do so via phone (403-851-2572), through the [website](#) or the [BluePrince Portal](#). Please see BluePrince [Instructions](#) for assistance.
- Access must be arranged by the homeowner and someone 18 years or older must be present.
- Inspections will either be in the morning (between 8:30 am and noon), or in the afternoon (between noon and 4:30 pm). Inspections are conducted from Monday to Friday, excluding Holidays.
- If you wish to cancel your inspection, please call: 403-851-2572, email safety.codes@cochrane.ca, or log on to the portal. If sending an email, please provide your electrical permit number and project address.

PLEASE NOTE: The electrical inspection is separate from plumbing, gas and building inspections.

Inspection Types

- Rough – In Inspection
 - a. Have all wiring and interior of outlet boxes readily visible.
 - b. Pull up the vapour barrier, the insulation may stay but please ensure all wiring is visible.
 - c. All wiring must be supported or secured.
 - d. Remove outer sheath of wiring and terminate all wiring into outlet boxes and fixtures. (See page 12).
 - e. Ensure all splices are made and all grounding is complete in outlet boxes and fixtures. (see page 12).
 - f. Do **NOT** secure devices (receptacles and switches) to outlet boxes. Leave all wiring and terminations visible. (See Page 12).

- g. Cables may be terminated into the panel board and may be terminated on breakers.
- h. Use caution if working on energize exposed wiring.
- i. Rough and underground inspections should be combined.
- j. Exposed the trench on at least one end to confirm depth. Pictures indicating the trench depth may be taken.
- k. Access must be provided to all areas where electrical work has been completed. Your house may also require access for your garage and hot tub permit.

➤ Final Inspection

- a. Access must be provided to all areas where electrical work has been completed.
- b. Do **NOT** have any exposed live wiring.
- c. Install all devices, receptacles and light fixtures.
- d. Any open outlet boxes or unfinished wiring must be properly secured and installed in a junction box with an approved splice cap and a junction box cover.
- e. Install, terminate and energize all breakers, if safe to do so.
- f. Complete the panel board breaker directory. All breakers must be labelled correctly.

➤ Possible Outcomes

The Electrical Safety Codes Officer will advise of the inspection outcome via email. There are three possible outcomes:

- a. Acceptable (PASS) – No deficiencies noted, continue with installation.
Depending on the scope of the project a permit can be closed with only one inspection completed, either at rough-in or final. If this happens there will be notes provided indicating NO more inspections required.
- b. Needs Correction VOC – deficiencies have been noted and once corrections are made a Verification of Compliance may be submitted. A signed copy can be sent to electrical.codes@cochrane.ca. Then you may continue installation if at rough-in stage. If at final stage, once VOC is received and accepted then the permit will be completed and closed.
- c. Needs Correction, re-inspection required – Once noted deficiencies are corrected then a re-inspection can be requested and scheduled.

A Permit Service Report can be requested once all required inspections are completed. This report summarizes inspection outcomes confirming everything meets current electrical code. You can request this report by emailing safety.codes@cochrane.ca or calling 403-851-2572.

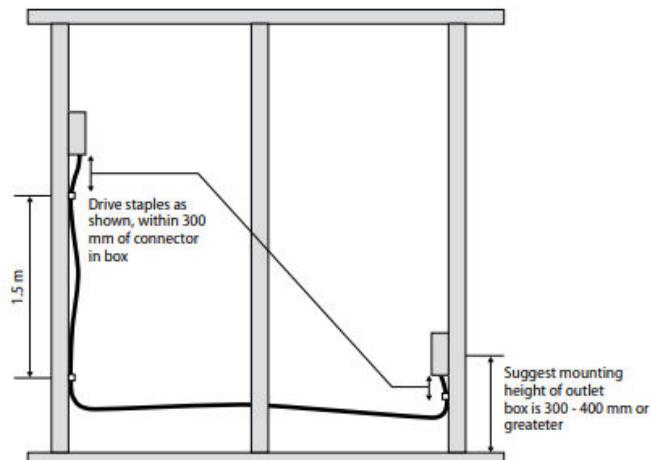
General Information

➤ Panel boards (service and sub-panels)

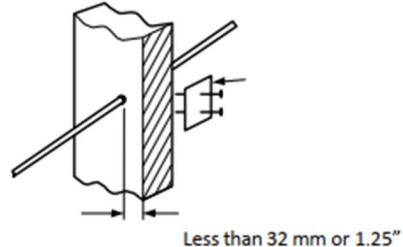
What you CAN do	What you CAN NOT do
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Have 1m clearance with secure footing in front ○ Have adequate lighting ○ Have minimum headroom of 2.2m (7'.2") ○ Identify all branch circuits to what they serve. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Put sub-panels in clothes closets, bathrooms or stairways ○ Have any breaker more than 1.7m (5'.5") ○ Relocate or change the main panel board

➤ Non-metallic sheathed cable (NMD90) and Armoured cable (AC-90) branch circuit wiring.

- Support cables with approved straps or staples within 300mm (1') of an outlet box and at intervals of 1.5 (5') thereafter.
- An approved mechanical protection plate is required where cables:
 - Within 32mm (1.25") of the stud/ joist face surface, or
 - Subject to damage from nails or screws where located behind baseboards or cupboards.
- Exposed cables within 1.5m (5') of the floor required mechanical protection.
- Cables require a minimum separation of 25mm (1") from heating ducts.
- Communication (TV, phone, speaker) cables require and minimum separation of 50mm (2") from power and lighting cables.
- Do not fish NMD90 cable into walls with metal studs.
- NMD90 cable run through metal studs will require approved bushings or grommets to protect the wire from sharp edges.
- A minimum of 150mm (6") of conductor length is required in boxes.
- 240V loads such as electric heating, air conditioners, etc. should use NMD90 cables with a red outer jacket.



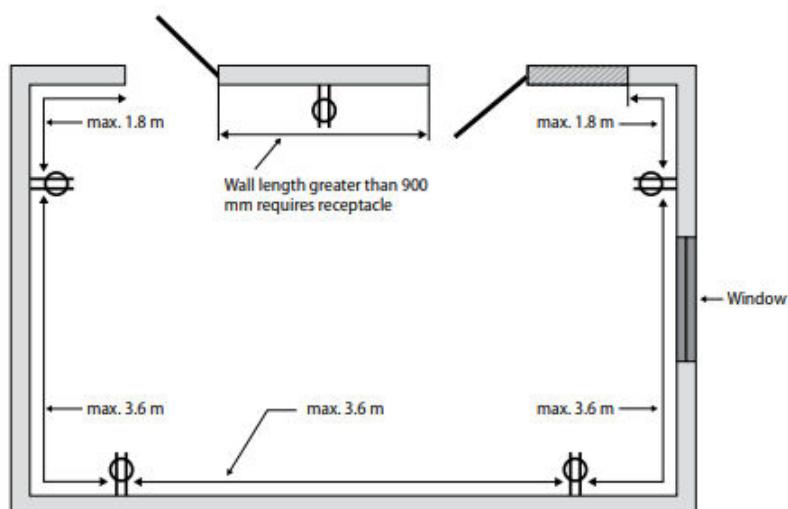
Protector plate approved for the specific purpose



➤ **Receptacles (outlets)**

- Any outlet installed within 2 m (6'5") from the floor must be tamper resistant.
- Outlets must be no more than 3.6 m (12') apart in every open room and no more than 1.8 m (6') from a door or closet. Any wall space of 900 mm (35") or more in width requires an outlet.
- Outlets must be no more than 4.5 m (15') apart in a hallway.
- No more than 12 outlets shall be on a branch circuit.
- To be included in the minimum outlet spacing requirements (shown in the diagram below), outlets must be installed no higher than 1.7m (5'5").

Bedroom Layout Example



- Usable wall space
- ▨ Unusable wall space
- ∅ Duplex receptacle

➤ Receptacles (outlets) Continued.

- Kitchen
 - Outlets must be no more than 1.8 m (6') apart measured along the wall behind a countertop, and no more than 900 mm (35") from a sink, stove or end point.
 - Each fixed kitchen island or peninsula larger than 600 mm x 300 mm (24" x 12") requires at least one outlet (15A split or 20A T-slot).
 - Each gas stove requires a 120V outlet not more than 130 mm (5") from the floor and as near midpoint as possible.
 - A 14-50R stove outlet with #8 AWG wire must not exceed 130 mm (5") to the center from the floor and as near midpoint as possible, with the U-ground slot at the side.
 - Do not place outlets in a cupboard, cabinet or similar enclosure, except where the outlet is for a specific type of appliance that is suitable for installation within the enclosure (i.e. a microwave).
- Bathroom/washroom
 - Install one outlet protected by a Class A Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter (GFCI) within 1m (3') of the bathroom or washroom wash basin.
- Laundry area
 - Each laundry area requires an outlet, in addition to the washing machine.
 - Dryer outlets are type 14-30R with #10/3 AWG cables.
- Garage
 - An outlet is required to be installed within 1 m (3') of a garage door opener.
 - Each car space in a garage requires one outlet.
- Outdoor
 - outlets require covers approved for wet locations and must be marked extra duty.

➤ Fittings, devices and junction boxes

- Fasten all outlet boxes securely in place.
- Install all outlet boxes flush to the finished wall.
- Ceiling fan outlet boxes shall be marked for fan support.
- Unused openings in boxes and panels shall be closed with approved covers.
- Cable boxes mounted on metal studs must be approved.
- When used with lighting, vapour barriers must be approved for 90°C.
- Hydro-massage bathtubs require removable access panels for maintenance.
- Support grouped outlet boxes and outlet boxes that are greater than 100 mm (4") on two sides.

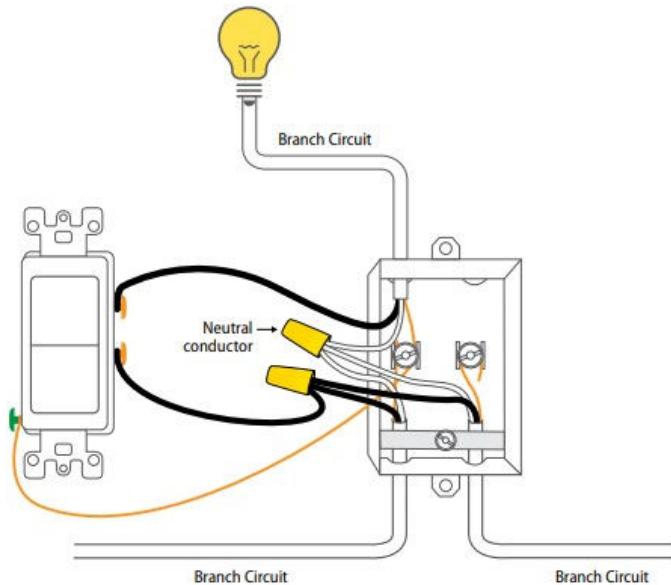
The maximum number of conductors allowed in outlet boxes.

** Where a box contains a dimmer switch or a GFCI outlet, deduct an additional wire for each.

Box type	Dimensions H x W x D	Box Volume Milliliters	Number of #14 AWG wires (Black, white wires)
Octagon (Light)	4 x 1-1/2 deep	245ml	9 wires with 3 wire nuts
	3 x 2 x 2-1/8 deep	344ml	13 wires with 3 wire nuts
Plug or switch (Device)	3 x 2 x 2 deep	163ml	3 wires with 3 wire nuts and 1 device **
	3 x 2 x 2-1/2 deep	204ml	5 wires with 3 wire nuts and 1 device **
	3 x 2 x 3 deep	245ml	7 wires with 3 wire nuts and 1 device **
	2 gang 2-1/2 deep	409ml	11 wires with 3 wire nuts and 2 devices **
	2 gang 3" deep	491ml	15 wires with 3 wire nuts and 3 devices **
	3 gang 2-1/2 deep	614ml	18 wires with 3 wire nuts and 3 devices **
Plug or switch (Device)	4 x 1-1/2	344ml	14 wires. Deduct for wire nuts.
	4 x 2-1/8	491ml	20 wires. Deduct for wire nuts.

➤ Lighting and fixtures

- Bare light bulb
 - Do not install fixtures with a bare light bulb in closets.
 - Protect light fixtures that are less than 2.1 m (7') (high with a guard or by location).
- Pot light
 - Pot lights not marked "TYPE IC" must be at least 13 mm (1/2") from combustible materials and 76 mm (3") from insulation or in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
 - You may be asked to remove a retrofit pot light installed after the rough inspection, to verify the installation.
- Three-way switch
 - Three-way switching is required at the top and bottom of stairways with four or more stairs that lead to a finished area or to an outside entrance.



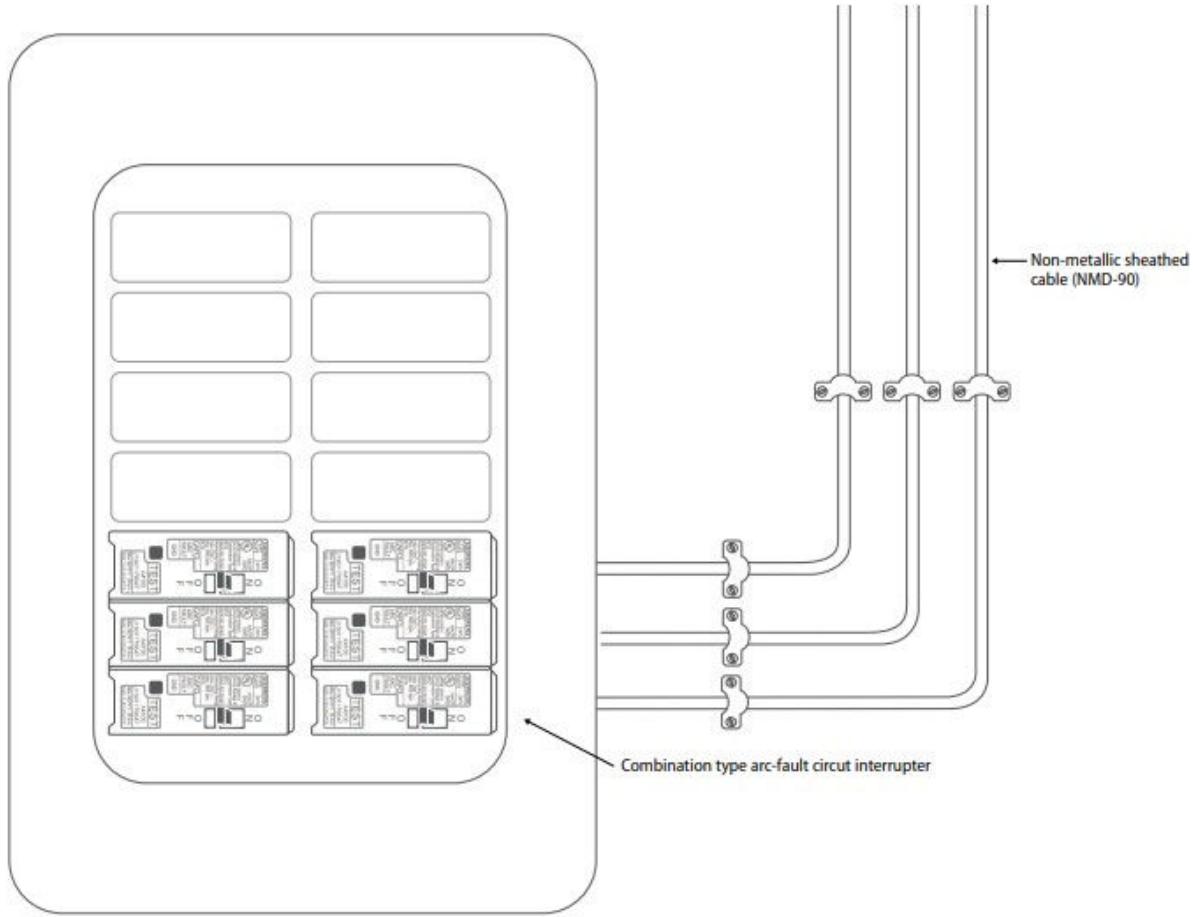
- Utility room
 - Utility room lights shall be controlled by a wall switch at the entrance.
- Bathtub/Shower stall
 - Light switches must be more than 1 m (3'2") away horizontally from a bathtub or shower stall. If not possible, they shall be at least 500 mm (20") away and protected by a Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter (GFCI).
- Other
 - The furnace disconnect switch must be accessible. Often when a basement is developed, the existing switch will need to be relocated (typically near the entrance to the utility room). This location is for emergency purposes, so access to the furnace disconnect switch must be reachable without passing the front of the furnace.
 - A neutral (white) conductor shall be installed at every light switch outlet box.
- Arc-fault protection

All branch circuits in a dwelling supplying 125V outlets rated 20A or less are to be protected by a combination type arc-fault circuit interrupter (AFCI).

Only the following 15A or 20A outlets are excluded:

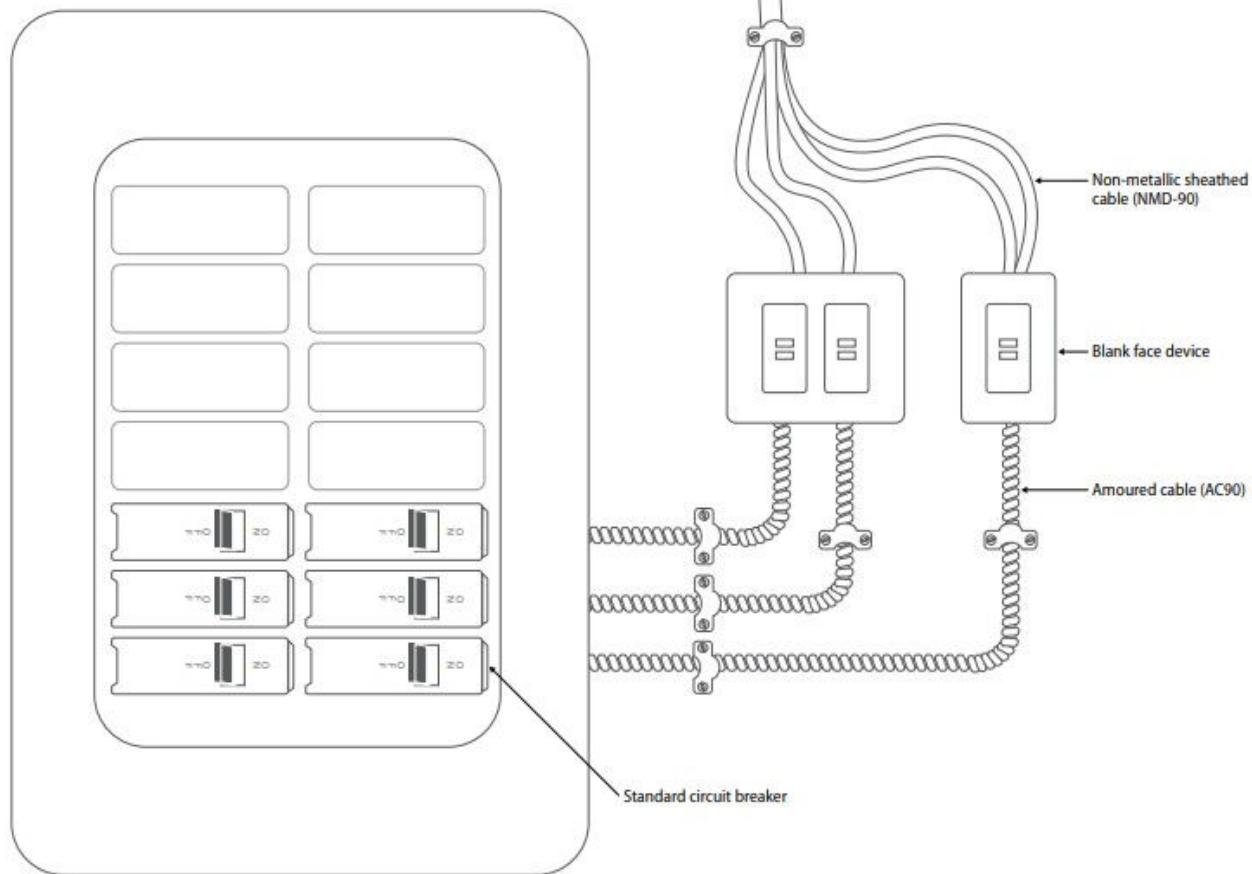
- Kitchen counter, island and peninsula outlets.
- Kitchen refrigerator outlet.

- A cord connected sump pump on a separate breaker (the sump pump must only be plugged into a single receptacle and labeled sump pump use only).



➤ Legacy panel, (existing panel)

Circuit breakers are required to be approved for use in the panel board in which they will be installed. Combination type AFCI breakers are not available for many older panel boards and the wiring method described below is required. The branch circuit wiring from the panel board to the blank face device or first outlet must be armoured cable (AC90) or approved electrical tubing. This is to add additional protection to the branch circuit wiring where breakers are not used. Where combination AFCI breakers are not used, blank face protectors and outlets are permitted with some restrictions. Each application has a preferred installation method based on level of protection and practicality.



➤ Branch Circuit wiring requirement

What you CAN do

- Have separate branch circuit for refrigerators and microwaves
- Have electrical heat on a dedicated circuit
- Have outdoor outlets on a separate circuit
- Install smoke and carbon monoxide alarms on a hard wired 120V circuit, with at least one light. These must not be on a circuit protected by Arc fault or ground fault circuit interrupters unless equipped with

What you CAN NOT do

- Have more than 12 outlets on a circuit
- Have more than two kitchen outlets on a 2 pole 15A circuit breaker or single pole 20A circuit breaker

an integral back up battery power source. Only a Building Safety Codes Officer can determine acceptable locations

- Have at least one outlet on its own breaker for utility rooms
- Have a separate circuit provided solely to supply power to each central vacuum system

➤ **Ground fault protection (GFCI)**

- 15A and 20A outlets installed within 1.5 m (5') of a sink, bathtub or shower must be GFCI protected.
- Exterior outlets within 2.5 m (8'2") of finished grade must be GFCI protected (automotive heater and charging outlets are exempt).
- Hydro-massage and hot tubs must be Class A ground fault protected.
- Ground fault circuit interrupters must be installed in a location that will facilitate testing. They cannot be closer than 3 m (10') to a hot tub and not closer than 1.5 m (5') to a hydro-massage bathtub.
- Light switches (including fan and heat controls) located between 500 mm (20") and 1 m (3'2") horizontally from a sink, bathtub or shower stall shall be protected by a GFCI.
- Heating devices (i.e. baseboard heater/towel warmer) located less than 1.8 m (6') above the floor and less than 1 m from a bathtub or shower stall shall be protected by a GFCI. Heating devices shall not be located closer than 500 mm (20") to a bathtub or shower stall.
- A manually operated control (i.e. thermostat) for a heating device shall be permitted to be less than 1m (3'2") from a sink (wash basin complete with a drainpipe) and not less than 500mm (20") from a tub or shower stall, if it is protected by a ground fault circuit interrupter of the Class A type or supplied by an extra-low-voltage Class 2 circuit.

➤ **Underground installations**

Click before you dig: www.albertaonecall.com/homeowners

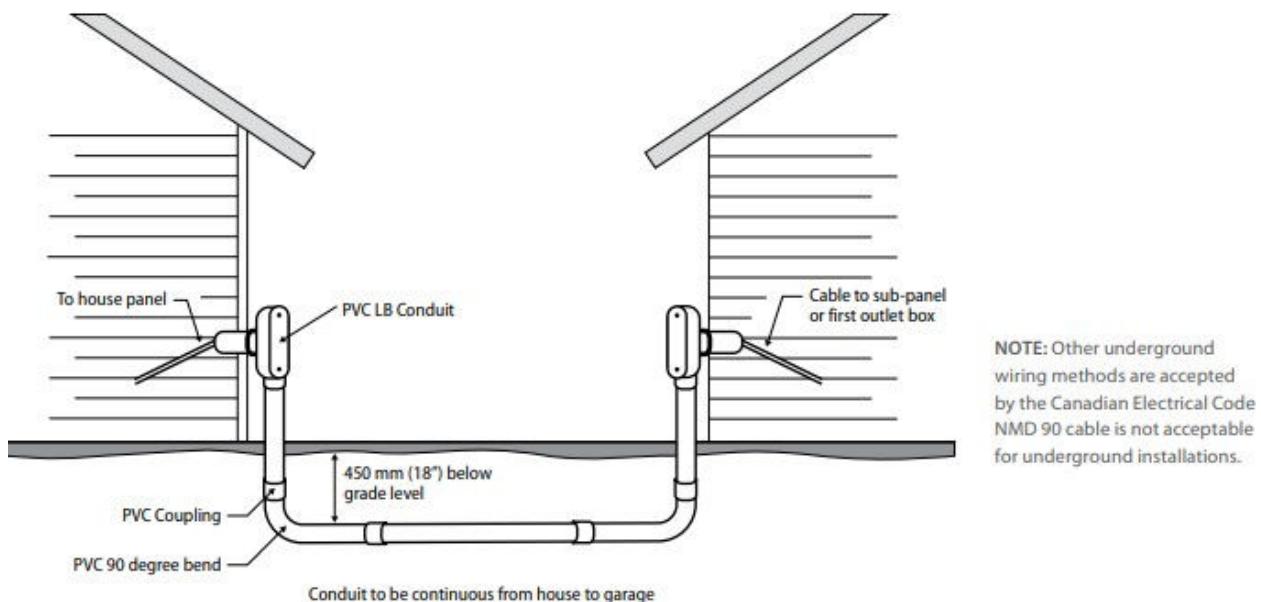
Direct buried conductors, cables or raceways must be installed to meet the minimum cover requirements. Distance measured is between finished grade and top of conduit or cable.

Wiring type	Non vehicle areas	Under vehicle traffic
Type NMWU direct buried **	600mm	900mm
Type NMWU in rigid PVC	450mm	600mm
Armoured cable (TECK90)	450mm	600mm

**Screened sand or screened backfill required.

Cables or conductors installed underground in a PVC conduit must be acceptable for use in wet locations (NMD90 is not acceptable).

- o Protect cables exiting from underground from mechanical damage by location or by rigid PVC conduit.
- o Gas lines (i.e. house to garage) are the homeowner's responsibility. When electrical conductors are installed in the same trench, it is recommended that the two systems be separated by 300 mm (1') of well tamped soil or a 50 mm treated plank (2x4 or 2x6 treated plank).



- o To prevent damage to the conductors or the electrical equipment, use a conduit expansion joint where underground PVC conduits or cables could be affected by settlement or frost.
- o Do not place backfill containing large rock, paving materials, cinders, large or sharply angular substances or corrosive material where it may damage or corrode cables or conduits and prevent adequate compaction of the soil.

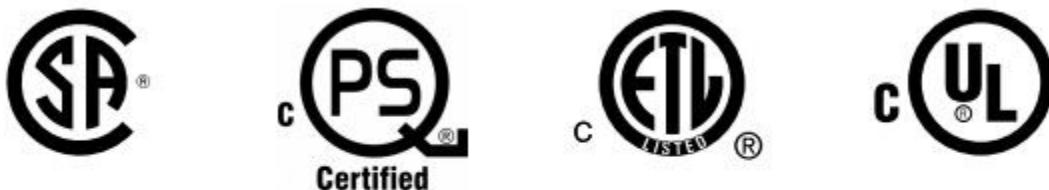
- Quick Reference for various installations

Installation type	Breaker size	Cable size	Size of conduit underground
Single circuit 120 Volt	15 Amp	14/2 NMWU	3/4" (21mm) Rigid PVC
240 Volt - 30 Amp Sub panel	2 pole 30 Amp	10/3 NMWU	1" (27mm) Rigid PVC
240 Volt - 40 Amp Sub panel	2 pole 40 Amp	8/3 NMWU	1-1/4" (35mm) Rigid PVC
240 Volt - 60 Amp	2 pole 60 Amp	6/3 NMWU	1-1/4" (35mm) Rigid PVC

- Use of approved electrical equipment

Electrical products and equipment must be approved by a Certification body, recognized by the Standards Council of Canada. Refer to the Alberta Electrical Safety STANDATA (LEG-ECR-2) found on the Alberta Municipal Affairs website.

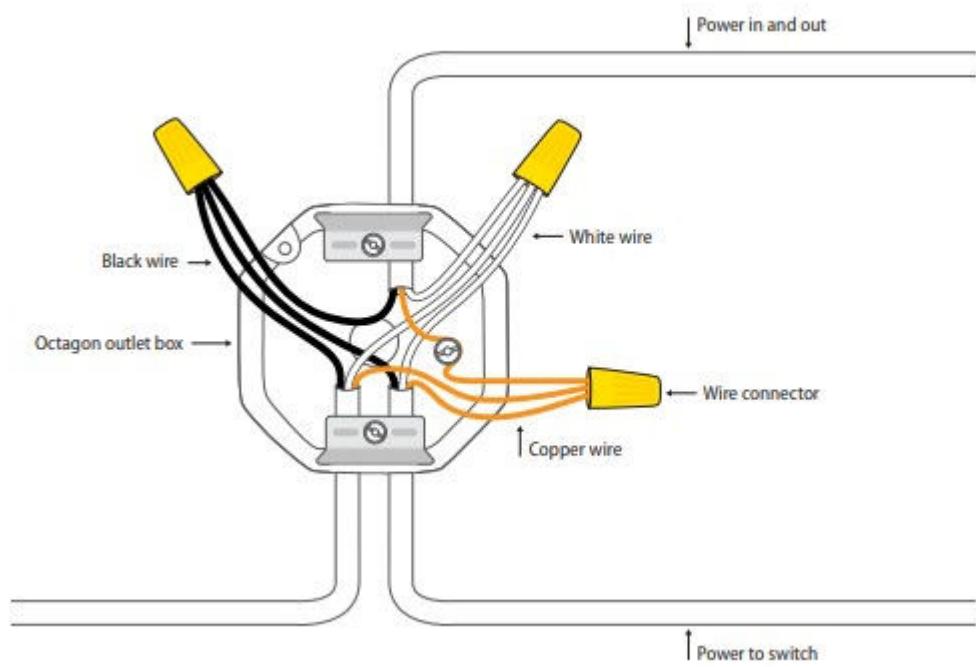
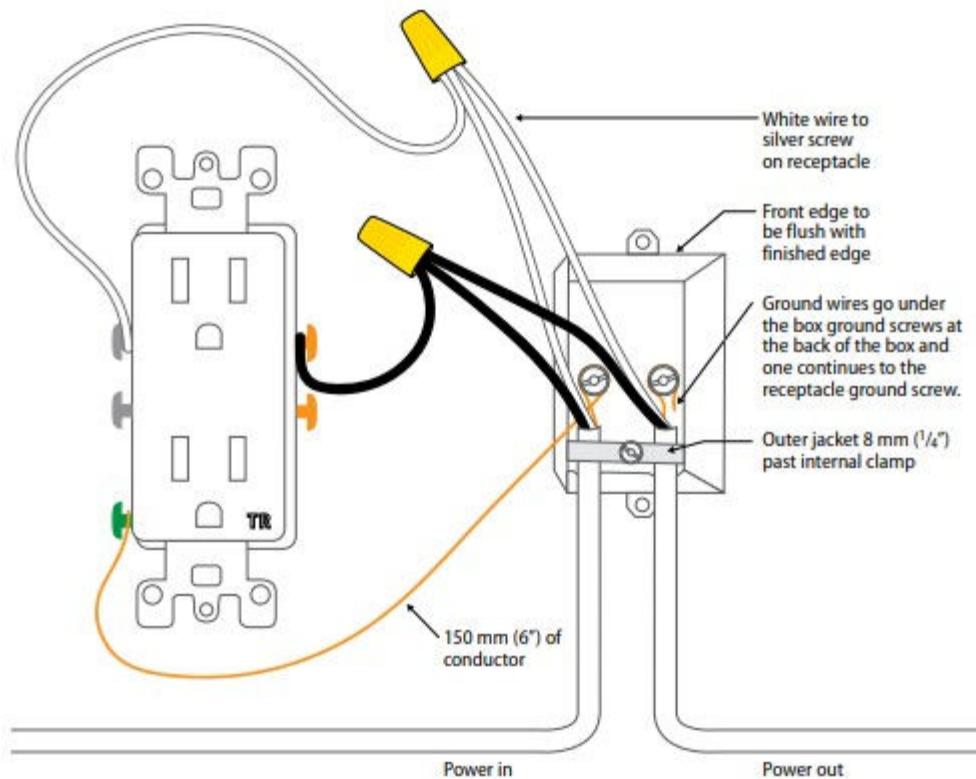
Certificaton Mark Examples



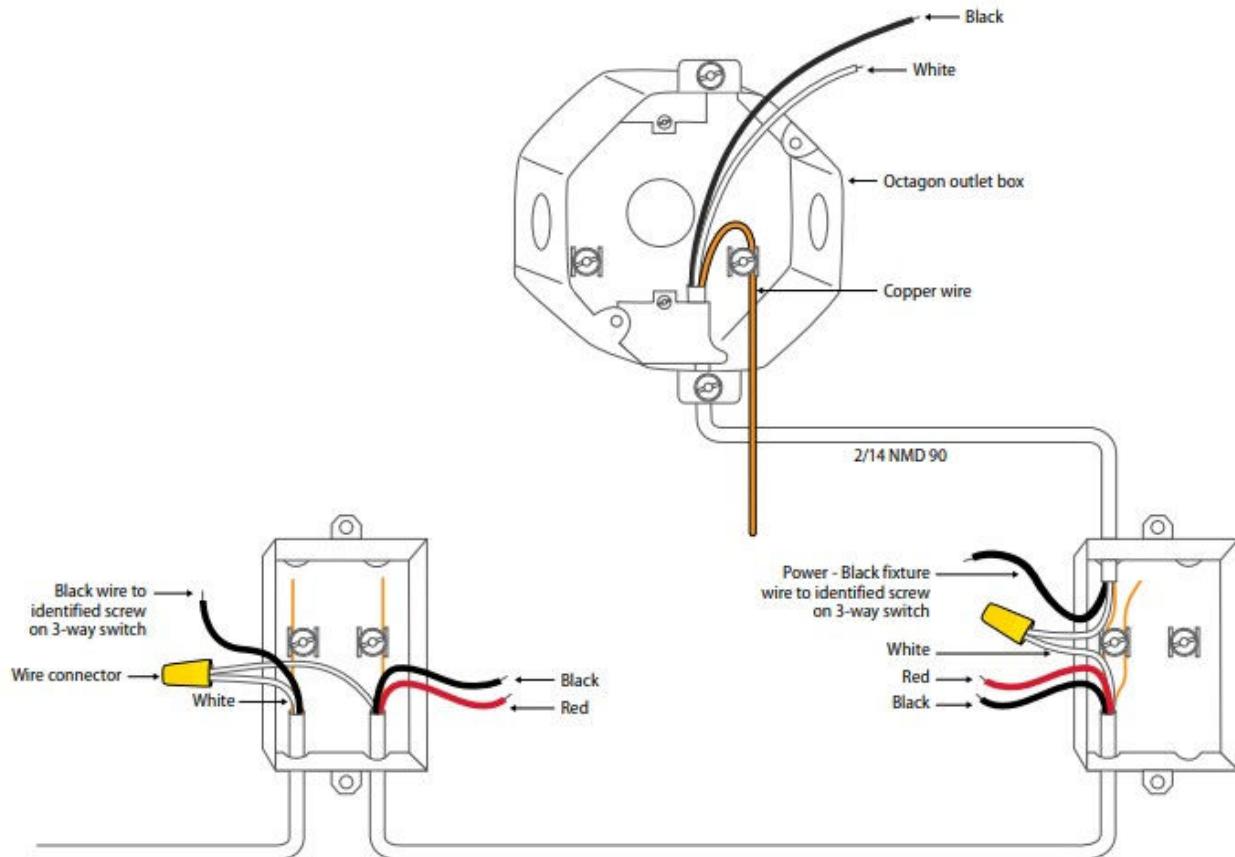
Inspection Label Examples



- Typical wiring practice



➤ Three-way wiring diagram



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