

FUNCTIONS OF THE HOME WIRING SYSTEM

Courtesy of Your Local HYDRO

1. To Bring Electricity Into Your Home From the Power Line—Electric Service can be compared with water service in cities and towns. Electricity flows along the power lines, and then along the wires in your home, just as water flows through the public water mains and then through your home's plumbing system.

The wires which are connected to the outside power supply bring electricity into your house. In many areas, these wires are brought in through a pipe or conduit, sometimes they are combined into a cable. Service conductors may also be brought in underground. They are called the "Service Entrance Wires." Modern Homes are equipped with a minimum of 3 wire 100 ampere 120-240 volt service.

2. To Distribute Electricity Through Your Home—The Service Entrance Wires are connected to the main switch and fuse, or the main circuit breaker. This is called the "Service Entrance Equipment." It serves as the junction point from which electricity is dispatched to various parts of the house. The Service Entrance Equipment also can be used to disconnect your home's main flow of electricity.

After electricity has entered the house through your Electric Entrance Equipment, it is distributed through your home by a number of smaller wires called

"Branch Circuits". The Branch Circuits carry electricity very much as the plumbing pipes carry water.

3. To Deliver Electricity To Lights And Appliances — Each Branch Circuit delivers electricity to one or more "outlets" to which appliances and lights are connected. Most Branch Circuits serve several outlets. Some deliver electricity to individual major appliances.

4. To Protect the Home From Fire Hazard Due To Overheated Wires — Each Branch Circuit has its own protection in the form of a fuse or a circuit breaker, located in the Branch Circuit Box, right where the Branch Circuit begins. When a fuse blows or a circuit breaker opens, the wiring system is protecting itself from overheating, and helping to protect the home from the chance of fire.

5. To Provide A Means of Connecting and Controlling Lights and Appliances — The "outlets" in the wiring system correspond to the faucets in the plumbing system, except that the home requires many more electrical outlets than water faucets.

Convenience Outlets are available in several forms, most common of which is the standard "Duplex Convenience Outlet." You can also obtain "Triplex" or "Quadruplex" outlets, as well as a number of outlets assembled together on a

strip of molding. Lamps and plug-in appliances should be plugged directly into the Convenience Outlets.

Special Purpose Outlets are the openings through which certain major appliances are connected to their Individual Branch Circuits. There are specially designed "plug-in" outlets for some major appliances (the electric range or clothes dryer, for example). Other major appliances are connected to their individual Branch Circuits through standard Convenience Outlets. Sometimes they are connected directly to the wiring system. **Lighting Outlets** are the openings for fixed lights. We seldom think of them as "Outlets" because they are concealed behind the lighting fixtures. Nevertheless, they are "outlets" for electricity, just like the "Special Outlets" which serve major appliances.

Switches cut off or restore the flow of electricity to lights and appliances, without disconnecting them from the outlets. They also contribute to safety. When there are enough switches, properly located, you can "light your way" through dark rooms, and up and down stairways. This reduces the possibility of stumbling in the dark. "Multiple Switch Control" is a term you should understand. It means "control of a single light source from two or more locations." Careful attention to this point may save your family from broken bones.

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