

7 Warning Signs of Electrical Fire Risks

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Richard Carr is the Director of Volta Compliance. He is a fully qualified approved electrician graded with the Joint Industry Board (JIB). Richard has over 20 years' electrical experience working on commercial and industrial installations. In this article, he explains the main warning signs that there is an electrical fire risk.

The underlying cause of electrical fires is simple malfunctioning. Incorrect or faulty wiring can come about as commercial properties, in particular, have more complicated wiring than domestic buildings. This can inevitably lead to problems and increase the risk of electrical fires.

If electrical wiring isn't maintained and serviced periodically, then this risk gets even greater. It is the responsibility of any property owner or manager to ensure that they [comply with health and safety](#) risk assessments and that electrical repairs are carried out regularly.

Everyone should be aware of the early warning signs that your property could be at risk of an electrical fire. Read on for 7 signs to watch out for.

Signs that your property is at risk

1. Flickering lights – If your lights are flickering or dimming, they may have a loose connection or frayed wiring. Take this simple sign as a warning that your wiring is not working correctly. Contact a professional if the problem doesn't resolve, even after replacing bulbs.
2. Frequent circuit breaker tripping – The breaker has the essential, singular job of cutting off your electricity when the circuit overheats, to prevent fires. It is similar to the job a fuse does, except that circuit breakers can be used repeatedly. However, take this as a sign. If your breaker is constantly tripping, it is clearly trying to tell you something. Get a qualified electrician to check the wiring in case there is current leakage or loose, damaged wires.
3. Faulty appliances – In most commercial kitchens, a high amount of electricity is used to cook food.

This will increase the risk of a fire breaking out. That's why it's extremely important to ensure all appliances are in good working order, through [PAT testing](#).

4. Burning smell – If you notice a burning smell in your property that is hard to track down, it could mean that you have a short circuit, caused by [faulty or loose wiring](#).
5. Frequent blown fuses – If you are changing blown fuses on a regular basis, something isn't working correctly in the system and you will need to get a professional to repair it as soon as possible. Any number of things could be the reason your fuses are blowing, from overloaded or short circuits to faulty wiring.
6. Loose, discoloured and hot outlets and sockets – Electric sockets can crack easily and if not repaired can develop a greater risk of sparking a fire. Discolouration or scorch marks are a sign that overheating is occurring. Also, watch out for loose sockets, as wiring won't be properly secured and the electric current could be leaking.
7. Old-fashioned lighting – Electrical lighting can cause a fire if the wattage of the bulbs exceeds the capabilities of your light fixtures. Many buildings still use old wiring in their lighting systems. This can mean that they aren't able to handle the amperage (the strength of the electric current) needed, leading to overheating and sparking.

Minimising electrical fire risks with Volta Compliance

Volta Compliance can protect your business from electrical fires by carrying out [electrical testing and inspection](#), and ensuring problems are repaired. If you want to eliminate warning signs of electrical fire, contact us on 0113 397 1361 or email info@voltacompliance.com to arrange your electrical inspection.