

ELECTRICAL DESIGN – Planning Your Renovation Or Build



THREE LAYERS OF LIGHTING

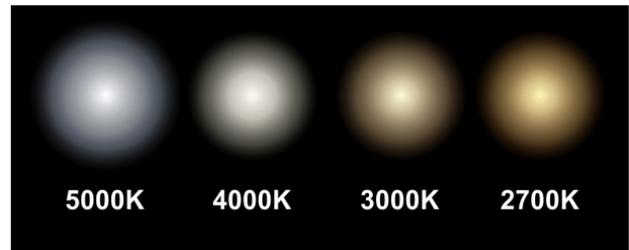
A good electrical design elevates your project from great to wow! Whether you hire a professional interior designer or want to be a weekend warrior, the laws of layered lighting are important to consider. There are three layers to examine: Ambient, task and accent lighting.

Ambient lighting or general lighting is the base of your layers. It is important it provides enough glare-less light to allow safe movement about your space. Chandelier's, ceiling fixtures or wall sconces are great choices, but you can also use track lighting or fluorescent fixtures in a commercial setting. Floor and table top lamps also create the light necessary for this application.

Task lighting provides light directly where you need it. While designing the lighting for your room, take a close look at the areas you will be spending the most time and decide what you will be doing there. Will you be chopping vegetables? Pouring a drink? Settling down with a good book? Its a good idea to bring light directly above these areas with hanging pendants or above counter lighting. Try to

avoid using ceiling mounted track lighting as they can create shadows or an irritating glare. Using wall sconces on either side of your mirror is a great way to use your electrical design functionally as well as aesthetically. So you can see, this layer not only helps you safely perform your daily tasks, it also brings depth and beauty to your space.

Accent or directional lighting is the final layer that brings everything together. Do you have architectural features, beautiful cabinetry, artwork or collections you want to show off? You can use directional recessed lighting, track lighting as well as specialty lighting to create stunning elegance to your space. This layer is so important in your electrical design to make your room identifiably yours!



Be sure to choose the correct temperature!



FINDING THE RIGHT LIGHT - THE THREE S'S

Finding the right light fixture may seem like an easy task, but it can go terribly wrong without a bit of planning. Basically, it boils down to the three S's: Safety, Size, and Switches. With these three steps, you will have the knowledge it takes to purchase a product you will enjoy for years to come.

1. SAFETY

This is obviously the most important point. Safety out weighs the cost and style by a mile, and its quite simple to know what to look for. First, it's key that you find the little logos on your the back of your light. You're pretty safe if you are buying from a Canadian store, but not so much when your search is online. It's easy to find an inexpensive knock off over sees, but it's more often than not, dangerously under rated. What you want to look for is either a UL or CSA mark.



UL is a global leader in testing, inspection, certification, auditing and validation. They basically wrote the book on safety, so finding this mark on your product indicates that it has met the minimum requirements of the safety standards and continues to comply with these standards by performing factory follow-ups and inspections. You want to look for a little C on the left of the mark to make sure the Canadian safety laws are also considered.



CSA The Canadian Safety Association This mark shows that a product has been independently tested and certified to meet recognized standards for safety or performance. The CSA is accredited by a crown corporation know as the Standards

Council of Canada, So you know it is as safe as you can get.

You do not have to find both of these marks, but it is crucial you find at least one. This goes for any electrical device, like kitchen appliances, extension cords and lamps.

Secondly, make sure to check over the fixture carefully, looking for any defects or fraying, especially if your using kijiji or any other recycling method

2. SIZE AND PLACEMENT

A great electrical design is essential to this "s". I can't count the number of times I've seen people pay twice for the installation of the same lighting fixture because they changed their mind on the type of light they want, or changed their mind on the placement of their mirror after the wires were already pulled in. Its important to stick to the choices you make with your electrical design to keep to within your budget. By using the following guidelines, you'll be well on you way to designing a fantastic space.

Ceiling fixtures. A general rule of thumb is to measure the length and width of the room. Add those two numbers together to determine the width of your fixture. 10 feet by 12 feet, the ceiling fixture should be 22 inches wide. Ceiling fans should always be centre of the room; don't put them at the head of your bed or some other inventive place, unless you are working with a professional designer that knows just how to bend the rules.

Pot lights or recessed lighting. Take your ceiling height and divide it by two. This is the distance you'll be using between your lights. So, if you have 8' ceilings you'll want to space them approximately 4' apart.

Chandeliers above tables. Measure your table

and find a chandelier that is between 2/3 and 3/4 of the length. Remember to keep in mind the look. If it is elaborate, it will feel larger, if it is streamline, it will feel smaller. So, this is where you get to add your personal touch; go with your gut and pick something that you'll enjoy for years to come. I recommend spending a bit more on a chandelier – it's better to adore it than remind yourself of how cheap you really are. If you have 8' ceilings, keep the bottom of the light 30 to 36" above the table. And if you have higher ceiling, add 3" for every foot above 8.

Sconces. Usually sconces are located about 3/4 of the height of your ceiling, but this will change if your using them in a bathroom or bedroom. If you're going to be close to the sconce, pick a small one so you don't overwhelm the space. And, if your using them in a bedroom as a bedside light, sit on your bed and place them half way between your head and the book in your hand.

Bathroom Vanity. The ideal lighting for a vanity is placing two sconces on either side of the mirror, but most people do not have the room for this. So, the next best thing is a bathroom bar. Measure your mirror or mirrors and do not exceed the length when you buy your fixture. Place them about 3" above the mirror and your set.

Pendants. If you're using pendants above a table or island, measure the width and subtract 12" to find the maximum width of your pendant shade. Keep them a couple feet apart, and again, use your judgment to tweak the positioning. Also, sit down and make sure there are no glaring lights for you and your family to contend with at supper time.

3. SWITCHES

Basically there are three types of switches. Standard, Dimmer and Specialty.

Standard switches. They're exactly what it sounds like, the light will turn off or on. Dimmers are also exactly how they sound; they control the amount of light coming from the bulb. Do not go cheap when purchasing a dimmer. You may be happy with them for a few months but they usually fail or start to buzz, just causing you spend more in the long run. It's best to buy dimmers through your contractor to ensure your using the highest quality out there.

Specialty switches. You can get built-in timers, motion sensors or even smart devices. Its great to use motion sensors in closets or hallways (places where you need light for a short amount of time and want to save energy.)

Smart switches. These are very cool and are made by a variety of home automation companies, Alexa, Google Home, Control4 to name a few. These are definitely a luxury but can be extremely beneficial for some peoples lifestyles. If you travel a lot, have accessibility challenges or you're just a techie, these products can become indispensable and add to your quality of life.

So, remember the three S's for finding the right light, safety, size/placement and switches or just contact Promax Electric Ltd, and we'll remember for you!

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[Master Electrician Code of Ethics](#)

