

50% of Domestic Fires are Caused by Electricity

Thanks for taking the time to read this article, I'm sure you will find something in the content that will help keep you safe. My name is Chris Hector I'm a registered Approved Contractor with the NICEIC, (the UK's leading voluntary regulatory body for electrical contractors). Over the coming months I'm going to take you through all the possible risks and safety features of electrical systems in the home. If you aren't concerned about your electricity or the safety of your home or family, this article isn't for you. If you would like to know more about electrical safety please read on.

The Service Head

The service head is where the electrical supply enters your property, runs through the main cut out fuse and continues on to your meter. Here is an example of a service head.



This is the most potentially dangerous part of your system. Fault currents could potentially reach into the 1000's of Amps, more than enough to start a fire or kill someone. As such it's not really something you should be poking around at, but here are some simple visual checks you can make.

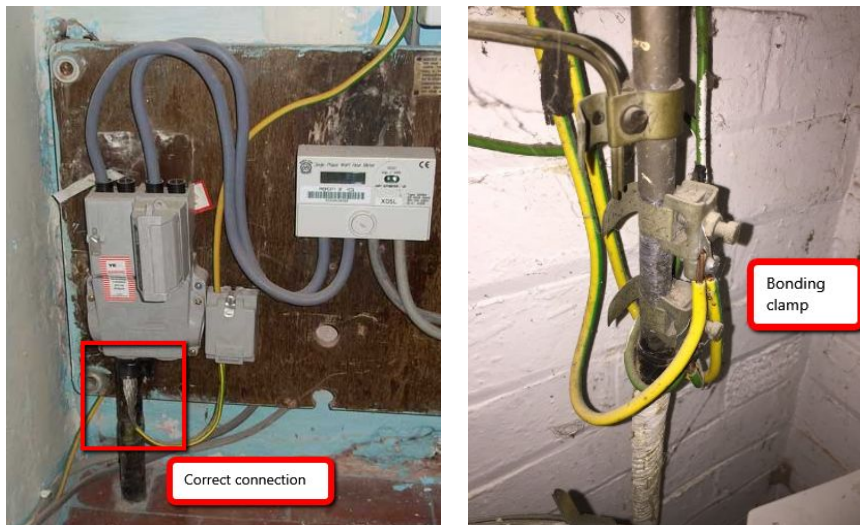
1. Is the service cable marked, scratched or damaged.
2. Is the service head cracked, damaged or showing signs of thermal damage.
3. Is the service head safely secured to a wall.

Here is an example of a dangerous service head. The mounting board has disintegrated. The neutral has exposed copper showing and the casing is broken. The second picture, in comparison, shows the same installation after Western Power fixed it.



WARNING: BONDING CLAMPS

Sometimes the lead sheath of the service cable is used to earth your system. This is perfectly acceptable if the connection is made correctly. See the below pictures.



Bonding clamps are used on copper water and gas pipes. They aren't appropriate for the lead sheathing of the service cable. The locking screw can be forced through the sheathing and penetrate the cable creating potential fault currents into the 1000's of amps. Here is a picture showing the damage a bonding clamp can do. The centre of the rectangle is the paper wrap before you get to the live a neutral conductors. A lucky escape for this

nottingham landlord. Western power had to dig up the pavement and replace the cable.



If you have any of the above issues you should call Western Power and inform them of your concerns (0800 096 3080). If you are not sure call one of the electrical contractors in this directory who will be happy to professionally inspect the service head for you.

Thanks for reading and keep safe.

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