

Is Your Old Switchboard Hiding a Deadly Secret? The Truth About Asbestos Switchboards and Why You Must Replace Them Now

When was the last time you checked your switchboard? If your property was built before the 1990s, there's a hidden danger you need to know about—**asbestos switchboards**.

Often overlooked and quietly aging behind closed doors, these outdated boards aren't just a safety risk—they're a **serious health hazard**. And in many homes and commercial buildings, they're still quietly sitting in place.

If you're still operating with an old electrical switchboard, this is the wake-up call you can't afford to ignore.



What Is an Asbestos Switchboard?

Asbestos switchboards—also known as **Zelemite boards**—were commonly installed in Australian homes and buildings between the 1940s and late 1980s. They contain compressed asbestos materials used for insulation and fire resistance.

At the time, asbestos seemed like a miracle material. Today, we know better.

When disturbed, these boards can release **deadly asbestos fibers** into the air. Inhaling just one of these microscopic fibers can lead to fatal diseases like **mesothelioma, asbestosis, and lung cancer**.

The Hidden Dangers of Asbestos Switchboards

Here's why asbestos switchboards are a ticking time bomb in your electrical system:

- **Health hazard:** Damaged or disturbed boards can release airborne asbestos during inspections, repairs, or even just from age-related deterioration.
- **Outdated safety standards:** These boards lack modern safety features like circuit breakers, RCDs (safety switches), surge protection, or overload safeguards.
- **Electrical fires:** Old, brittle wiring combined with outdated fuses and overloaded circuits = serious fire risk.
- **Non-compliance:** In many regions, asbestos boards make your property non-compliant with current electrical safety regulations.

How to Identify an Asbestos Switchboard

Not sure if your switchboard contains asbestos? Here are some warning signs:

- The board is made from **thick, grey-brown material** that looks like cement sheeting (Zelemite).
- Your property was built before **1990**.
- The board houses **ceramic fuses** or appears brittle, cracked, or flaky.
- There's a distinct **fiber-cement texture** to the backboard or surrounding area.

Important: Never attempt to inspect or test a suspected asbestos switchboard yourself. This must be done by a **licensed electrician and asbestos professional**.

The Safe Solution: Switchboard Replacement

If your switchboard contains asbestos, the only safe move is **complete replacement** by a qualified professional. Here's what the process includes:

1. **Asbestos assessment** by a licensed contractor.
2. **Safe removal** of the contaminated board following strict health and environmental guidelines.
3. **Upgrade to a new, compliant switchboard** with:
 - Circuit breakers
 - Safety switches (RCDs)
 - Surge protection
 - Modern cabling and load management

Why Replace Now?

- **Protect your family or employees** from life-threatening asbestos exposure.
- **Prevent electrical fires** caused by overloaded or outdated systems.
- **Meet insurance and compliance standards**—many insurers won't cover properties with outdated or unsafe switchboards.

- **Boost property value** with a safe, modern, compliant electrical system.

Real Talk: This Isn't a DIY Job

Dealing with asbestos is not just dangerous—it's illegal to handle without the proper licenses. When it comes to switchboard replacement, you need a **qualified electrician** who understands both electrical safety and asbestos protocols.

At **The Plug Electrical**, we specialize in:

- Safe asbestos switchboard removal
- Modern switchboard installations
- Full electrical compliance upgrades
- Fast, clean, professional service you can trust

Final Word: Don't Wait Until It's Too Late

Asbestos switchboards aren't just outdated—they're deadly. If your property has one, now is the time to act. Replacing it isn't just a safety upgrade—it's a lifesaving decision.

Book a switchboard inspection today and take the first step toward a safer, compliant, and more energy-efficient electrical system.

[CALL TO ACTION]

Worried your switchboard contains asbestos?

Contact **The Plug Electrical** for a fast, safe inspection and

upgrade quote.

Safety starts with a switch.