

# What are RCD? Safety Switch? Fuse? and what to do in the Event of a power outage.

The first thing we need to understand is that every home will have some sort of circuit breaker in your meter/fuse box or in your sub-box.

Depending on the age of the property there will be some type of safety device on the feed, in this example the feed simply means, the electricity coming from the mains into your property.

Your property should have an external meter/fuse box and you may also have an internal sub-box. Located in these boxes can be an array of different types of circuit breakers/safety switches which should turn off (cut the feed/electricity) if there is a problem.

The old fuse system that many of us grew up with and know well was located in the meter/fuse box outside the house.

These fuses are located in a circuit, circuits for this example is simply the feed or electricity coming from the mains supply into your property, to a light or any appliance through a power outlet.

The feed or electricity actually follows a circuit, starting at the power generating station, then to your home and to the light globe or appliance and back, minus the actual amount of electricity used by the globe or appliance.

The fuse, RCD (Residual Current Device) CB (Circuit Breaker) or Safety Switch provides a fast power cut-off in problem situations. Like the old fuse system these devices are located in the circuit but, while doing a similar job they have different functions.

Never treat electricity lightly, it's a great tool but, even with an RCD, CB, Safety switch or fuse you must never rely on these devices. There is no substitute for basic safety precautions.

So if you suddenly lose power or light.

Let's look at an RCD and what it does.

An RCD or CB is the safety switch between you and the electricity that is trying to make its way to the ground. (Could be through you and that would hurt)

Many power outages reported to me as the property maintenance manager here at Ecclesia housing are one or other of the safety devices having being tripped/turned off due to a fault in an appliance, usually a kettle, fridge, toaster, a power board or lead.

In milli-seconds the device will cut the feed/electricity and mostly this will only be to one circuit.

If you lose power often it will only be to lights and not the power points or some power points and not others or the other way round (lights and power/feed to power point should always be on a separate circuit). The safety device in the fuse box or sub box will be in the down position if it has tripped.

It is quite safe to push this back to the up position, it may well trip back down to the off position suddenly. If it does it can be a process of elimination to establish what is happening. I often go through this process by phone with tenants.

First, establish what you have power to, no need to do anything here anything working fine is best left alone. Go to your fuse or sub box and establish if a safety device is tripped? If so push it back up to the on position.

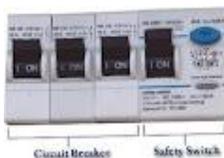
If it trips back down consider what appliance you were last using? Disconnect by removing all plugs from the power points. When this is done and this may include your fridge go back to the fuse/sub box and try to re-set the safety device by pushing it up.

If it stays up? you can be fairly sure something you have un-plugged or turned off has caused the safety device to turn off. Now start by plugging in and turning on one at a time all the appliances or devices you have previous un-plugged. You need to do this one at a time checking the safety device in the fuse/sub box each time.

You may be surprised to find it is simply an appliance or lead that is faulty and has caused the safety device to turn off. You should not use this item again.

If this process has not resolved your power loss? contact the maintenance line immediately here at Ecclesia housing.

Gary Mc Arthur



Circuit Breaker



Fuse Board with RCD protection