ELECTRICITY SUPPLY BOARD AND FUSES ETC

These safety instructions should be read carefully and kept for future reference.

Supply company electricity meter(s) and main fuse(s) are sometimes mounted in a locked box that is outside the dwelling and available to the householder who holds a key. Access to this box may be necessary to read the meter(s) or to switch off the whole electricity supply. However, this equipment is the property of the electricity supplier and must not be tampered with in any way. This restriction must still be observed if the equipment is located inside the dwelling.

If the main meter is outside the dwelling there will be a place inside where the wiring enters. The switches and fuses for all of the electrical outlets within the dwelling will be found there. If the main meter is inside it is most likely that the switches and fuses for the dwelling will be found alongside.

Knowledge of the wiring behind the Fuse Box, switches and other things that may be found there is not within the capacity of the ordinary person. If any kind of attention is needed to this area, except for the changing of a fuse,(see below), GET AN ELECTRICIAN.

It is usual for this Fuse Box to be placed in a position that is not unsightly, such as in a cupboard, high on a wall or in an alcove. It is helpful to know where it is, and essential if a fuse is blown!

If your Fuse Box is at a 'child-available' height they must not be allowed to handle, play with or touch the board's wiring or equipment. For preference this area should be boxed in and locked.

Keep a torch or candle and matches as well as necessary tools and fuse wire, handy near the Fuse Box to facilitate any fuse replacement.

When replacing a fuse first switch off the power. Use only a fuse, or piece of fuse wire, of the same rating as was used before. Modern fuse holders have the rating shown on the fuse holder. A blown fuse DOES NOT MEAN THAT YOU NEED TO FIT A HIGHER RATED ONE.

The commonest fuse ratings will be 5 Amp for the lights and 30 Amp for the power sockets. However, older properties may have 5, 10, or 15 Amp fuses so it is wise to acquaint yourself with which you have. Also whether the fuses are of plain wire or pre-fabricated cartridges so as to have replacement fuses available when needed.

It is helpful to know which socket is supplied by which fuse in the box. Do this simple check during the day. Switch off the power. Withdraw one of the power fuses, 30 Amp. Switch on the power again and make a written note of which sockets are now 'dead'. Switch off the power again. Replace the first fuse and pull out another and repeat the process like this until all the fuses and outlets have been identified and listed.

The checking of the outlets is made easier if you are able to connect lights, (portable, standard or other), to every outlet first. In this way it is easy to see which lights are not lit when you switch on the power again.

The lighting fuses can be checked in the same way but in this case there may be only one or two fuses.

If any work is to be carried out on an electrical outlet such as a socket or light fitting it should be done by a qualified electrician.

If your property has circuit breakers (they automatically switch of in the event of an overload) they can be safely reset. If, however, they immediately, or frequently trips, seek professional advice.