



## Clipsal Case Study: Saunders Electrical Group, NSW Home Safety Checks

It's fair to say the world has changed. Australians are staying indoors more than ever and are connected to their home electrical network for a longer duration. So how do you know that the electrical network in your home is functioning safely? As electricians, you have an opportunity to give peace of mind to your customers by conducting routine safety checks on every job. We sat down with Oliver, from Saunders Electrical Group, to understand how his team uses safety services to add value to their business, while protecting their customers.

### Tell us about your career as an electrician...

I started my apprenticeship in 2005, just working for a small-medium size company, about 15-20 guys. Mainly doing construction, building apartments, blocks of town houses and that sort of thing. I finished my apprenticeship and started doing solar panel installation with a large company that do a lot of infrastructure work. Worked with them for a couple of years, went overseas and then started working for a company that did lifts, escalators and automatic sliding doors, as a technician. That was pretty good for me career wise, out in the field, being face to face with customers and part of our role was to sell our products. I had never done it before and so I was exposed to trying to sell things like replacement parts, upgrade their doors, roller shutters, and that sort of thing. I always wanted to, one day, start my own business. And I had no idea about business, no idea how to sell, anything like that until I started learning some of those skills. And then I thought, now is the best time to have a crack, I'm still fairly young so at the end of the day, if it doesn't work out you can always go and get another job.

### What advice would you give to a young electrician starting their own business?

My piece of advice, and I back this 100%, my wife calls me obsessed. If you're going to start a business, I recommend you go all in. If this is something you really want to do, you can't have it as a side hustle. You've got to go at it 100%, put all your effort into it. I'm still learning obviously, I've only been in business for two and a half years, but I've just found if you don't go 100% into your business then you're not giving yourself every chance of succeeding.

### With people working from home more, is there more demand for safety work?

Definitely. Everyone's usually at home in the evenings and night time, but if you're going to be home a lot during the day I guess there's more risk, if you've got faulty electrical appliances or equipment. So definitely, it's good to do some checks and inspections make sure there are no hazards around.

### So when you do home safety checks, what kind of things do you look for?

Mainly the obvious stuff. Make sure there's no damaged or cracked power points, light switches, light fittings hanging off the wall, frayed cords on appliances, overloaded power boards. Always do a check on the switchboard and make sure they've got safety switches (RCDs) put in. You'd be surprised how many, especially the older homes don't have them. Quite often we'll come across a home or a switchboard that only has one or two circuits protected, and a whole bunch not. Some of them don't have any. Some of them are still the old ceramic fuses.

### Let's talk smoke alarms. How do you recommend these as a value-add in your jobs?

It doesn't matter what job we go to. If we've never been to this customer's house before, we'll always have a quick look around while we're there. Smoke alarms are a really good example for sparkies. Say you're there to upgrade some downlights, you're up there looking at the ceilings and you can see the smoke alarms are obviously older than 10 years old. We'll just have a chat with the customer and make them aware that smoke alarms should be changed every 10 years and theirs are due to be changed over. If you let them go past 10 years there's a chance that they won't be as efficient which could lead to failure in operation, and you don't want to be sleeping through a fire. And look, for what they can do to protect you, your family and your home, I think it's a small investment to just replace them. So, we'll tell them the benefits and let them make the decision. We can't force anyone to do anything but if you let them know the reasons you're offering to replace them, it's pretty rare that they say no.

### Out of every 10 customers, how many would say no to new smoke alarms if they were due?

I'd say maybe one or two. And at the end of the day, if we knew they needed new smoke alarms and we didn't say anything to them and then next year that house burnt down, you can imagine how that would make me or any of my boys feel. We've actually said that before to our customers. It's the way you frame the conversation, we never try to sell anything that we don't think the customer needs, but if we were just to keep our mouth shut and something happened, I'd feel so bad.

### When you recommend a safety upgrade. Do you ever get a negative response?

It would depend on how you have a chat to them about it. For us, not that I don't care if we get the sale or not, it's like this customer could really benefit or really need this upgrade. I'll let them know we're here doing other work for them, we've got the stock in the van, and we're happy to do it at a reduced price because there's no call-out fee. We never try and force anyone, we just let them know the situation. At the end of the day, if they want to do it, cool let's do it. If not, then at least we can sleep easy at night.

### For more information on safety services and a checklist you can use with your customers visit:

<https://www.clipsal.com/learn-and-discover/trade-talk>

Thanks to:  
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