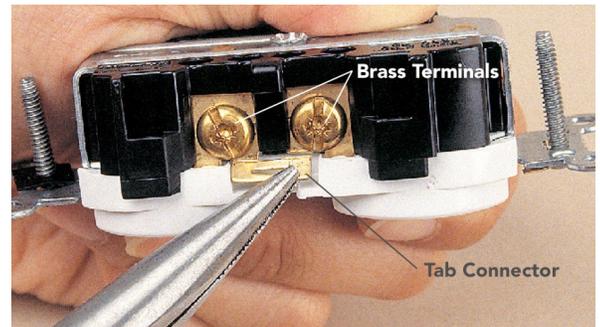


Elec-Tricks

Lately, I have been receiving a lot of phone call from home owners doing renovations, who have run into problems. Being a Master Electrician with to many years of experience, I giggle when I hear their dilemma, then I continue to walk them through exactly how to safely correct the problem.

The first one that I get a lot of calls for, is when people replace kitchen counter receptacles. Kitchen counter receptacles, are wired by a method called "split duplex". This is when you have a double 15 amp breaker in the panel, feeding up to 2 kitchen counter plugs. At the receptacle what you will find, is a red wire and a black wire both connected to the same side of the receptacles, the copper coloured side. On the other side, the silver coloured screws, you will find a single or double white wire. Here's where it gets fun.

When you duplicate the connections on the old receptacle and put the red on one screws and the black on the other, what you have done is unknowingly put 240 volt across the receptacle. Then, with a smile on your face and glowing with pride, you walk down to the electrical panel and flip on the breaker. What results next is the loudest "BANG" you have ever heard and sparks come out from the inside of the breaker. This is caused when the double breaker trips because you have caused a "dead short" across 240 volts...LOL. (sorry I didn't mean to laugh out loud).



When you change the receptacle, what most people do not notice is that between the 2 brass coloured screws is a small very important metal tab connecting the 2 screws. In order for this to work, you need to take pliers, and grab the small metal take and give it a wiggle. What happens next we hope, is that the little metal tab breaks and the connection between the 2 brass screws is severed. Problem solved...

Next I'm going to possibly fix one of your light problems. I get calls saying that "my light fixture seems to be blowing bulbs prematurely. I put in a new light bulb and a couple of days later it needs to be replaced. Now it doesn't work at all".

The problem we have found is most time very simple thing to repair. Inside the socket is a small metal tab on the top of the socket. This is the connection between the light bulb and the power. What is happening, most times, is that the tab has been bent up caused by the pressure of the light bulb. Here's the trick to repair this. First and most important go the the electrical panel and turn off the main break, that's the big one on top, separate from the rest. If you don't have a main breaker turn them all off.



This is the part I love telling people. Go to the light and stick a plastic spoon into the light socket. Using the spoon, catch the metal tab and bend it down slightly. What you have done is put the tab back into a position to make contact with the light bulb. Don't forget to turn the breakers back on. If the problem persist, call Robart Electrical Services.