MASHWORTH SERVICES
Professional - Reliable - Electrical

RCD Tripping – Self-Help Guide

What This Guide Covers

If your power has tripped, this guide helps you safely identify common causes and what to check next.

This is a basic self-help guide and does not replace a professional inspection.

Important: Only carry out simple checks. Do not remove covers or attempt to access internal parts of the installation.

Step 1 - Identify What Has Tripped

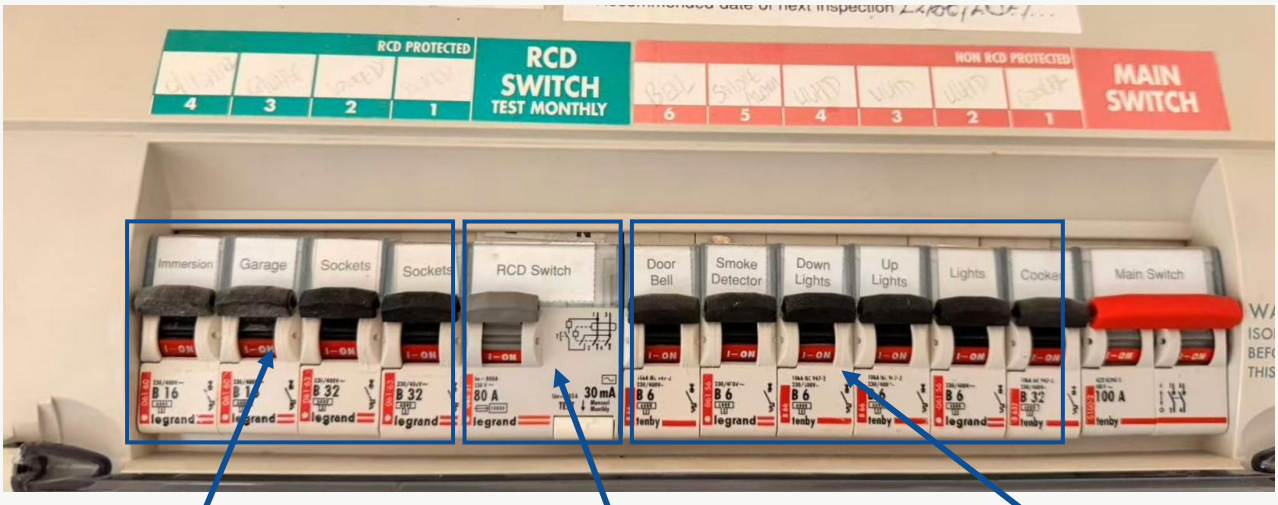
Check your consumer unit and confirm:

- Has the RCD tripped?
- Or an individual circuit breaker (MCB/RCBO)?

If only one circuit has tripped, the issue is likely limited to that circuit.

If the RCD has tripped, it may involve multiple circuits or an earth leakage fault.

The image below shows a typical consumer unit layout and helps you identify the RCD and individual circuits.



Circuits protected by the RCD

RCD (main protection device)

Circuits not protected by this RCD

Step 2 - Reset and Observe

Reset the device:

- Does it trip immediately?
- Does it stay on briefly before tripping again?

This helps indicate whether the fault is persistent or intermittent.

Step 3 - Turn Off All Circuits

- Turn off all circuit breakers (MCBs/RCBOs)
- Reset the RCD
- Then turn circuits back on **one at a time**

If the power trips when a specific circuit is turned on, the issue is likely on that circuit.

If the fault is intermittent, allow a short time between switching each circuit back on before moving to the next.

Step 4 - Unplug Appliances

Once the affected circuit is identified:

- Unplug all appliances on that circuit
- Reset the power
- Plug items back in **one at a time**

If the power trips when a specific item is plugged in, that appliance is likely faulty.

Step 5 - Check Common Causes

RCD tripping is often caused by:

- Faulty appliances (especially fridge freezers)
- Outdoor equipment (pond pumps, sheds, external sockets)
- Moisture in outside or bathroom lighting
- Recently installed or used equipment
- Damage to cables or accessories

Weather conditions such as heavy rain can affect outdoor electrical equipment.

Step 6 - Consider Recent Changes

Think about anything that has changed recently, such as:

- New appliances plugged in
- DIY work carried out
- Electrical work completed
- Equipment moved or replaced

These are often the cause of new faults.

Step 7 - Check for Overloading

If a circuit breaker (not the RCD) has tripped:

- Too many appliances running at once
- High-load items such as kettles, heaters, and ovens can overload circuits

Try reducing the load and resetting the circuit.

Step 8 – Visual Checks Only

You can carry out basic visual checks for:

- Damaged sockets or switches
- Signs of burning or overheating
- Loose or exposed cables

Do not remove covers or attempt any repairs yourself.

When to Stop

Stop fault finding and contact a qualified electrician if:

- The RCD will not reset at all
- It trips immediately with all circuits turned off
- You cannot identify the cause
- There are signs of damage or burning
- You are unsure at any point

Summary

RCD tripping is usually caused by a faulty appliance, moisture, or an issue on a specific circuit.

These steps can help identify simple causes safely.

If the issue continues, a professional inspection will be required.

Need Help?

If the issue continues, you can book a **fault-finding visit** - we'll help identify the cause and get things working safely again.

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