

# What can be done about it?

Our expert team at McCurdy Electric can quickly diagnose and upgrade the antiquated wiring system to current code standards. The wiring method that will be newly installed by us will be working for the next 100 years or more, just like the old knob and tube wiring has been in your house for the last 100 years or so. We have many years of experience working in old New England homes that still may be utilizing this wiring method, so we already know of certain key problems to look for. Please call our office with any other



questions you might have.

## Service Cost

The cost for our diagnostic evaluation is \$250. This includes a 2-hour session with two of our team members. The licensed electrician will look at any switch outlet boxes, receptacle outlet boxes, lighting outlet boxes, and any accessible K&T wiring

to determine how much needs to be replaced. We will refund half of the \$250 evaluation fee when you sign the proposal to perform the work needed.

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(Coupon must be presented prior to proposal)



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**WIRING IS NOT A HOBBY... HIRE A LICENSED ELECTRICIAN**

# A Homeowner's Guide to Knob and Tube Wiring

Your local solution to everything electrical!

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# What is Knob & Tube Wiring?

Knob and Tube wiring, sometimes abbreviated K&T, was a standard wiring method that was implemented as far back as the 1880s, and used up until the 1930s or 40s. It is called Knob and Tube, because

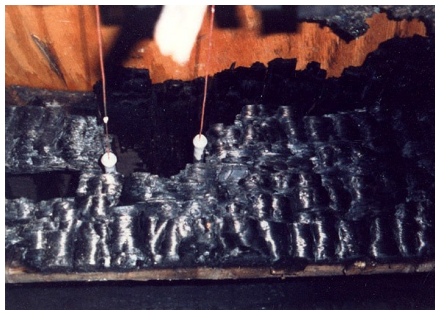


the single-conductor wires were supported by cylindrical ceramic nailed-down knobs, and passed through studs or joists via ceramic insulating tubes. Splices were sometimes made by soldering wires together and then wrapped up with cloth tape, and just left in “open air” without the splice being contained in an electrical box. Where conductors would come into a switch box, the wires would be protected with cotton cloth saturated with asphalt, called “loom”.

## The Problems...

- ◆ Many insurance companies will not insure houses that contain K&T wiring.
- ◆ **The National Electrical Code currently prohibits the use of insulation of any sort installed in walls where knob and tube wiring exists.** The potential for fire exists because the wiring can't disperse any heat that may be generated by flowing current.
- ◆ The cloth-like wire insulation or covering breaks down after time.
- ◆ This old style of wiring was mainly used to power items such as electric lamps, not modern equipment such as air conditioners, refrigerators, computers, space heaters, etc.

The photo below displays a close-up of a wood beam that was set aflame by old and faulty K&T wiring.



◆ A lot of times the “neutral” wire was switched instead of the “hot” wire - this is a dangerous practice and is now against code, but was commonplace in the era of K&T.

◆ There is no equipment grounding with K&T wiring, arguably the most important part of a sound electrical system. (For instance, on a receptacle, the third prong at the bottom of the device is for grounding whatever is plugged in. In older houses with K&T, 2-prong devices usually exist instead of the 3-prong type which are used today.)

◆ Some K&T wires are insulated by a rubber material that burns at a relatively low temperature.



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