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Getting an electrical contractor involved up front is a smart move - by John Sloane

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Your company is growing out of its existing office space, and you probably have mixed feelings about it.

The time has come to look for a larger space that fits with your vision of the company will see your company through the next phase of its growth and development. This can be exciting, a bit terrifying, and sometimes a combination of both. The most important thing to do is ask for help from qualified experts.

Find a reputable broker and start a search is a good first step. And once you consider making an offer, how about bringing in an electrical contractor?

Nonsense, you say. After all, you aren't planning a serious buildout, and you are impatient to get this deal done. So you ask the broker to provide a space that is ready to occupy, and to save time, you are willing to take it "as is."

It's the "as is" part where things can slide.

If you've ever purchased or leased a home, you may have hired a certified home inspector to check infrastructure systems – heating, plumbing and electrical - to make sure they are fully operational and in satisfactory condition.

A solid effort at due diligence makes equal sense when considering a commercial space.

Remember that there is much more to the electrical system of a commercial space than lighting and distribution outlets. The critical life safety systems that safeguard your employees and equipment are all part of the electrical system and need to be inspected to confirm that everything is in working order. These systems are especially important for businesses that plan to stay open during

extended power outages and natural disasters.

Fire alarm systems are one area that demand close scrutiny. Fire alarm systems may appear to be in working condition at first blush, but may still be in dire need of replacement or extensive maintenance

The fire alarm should be inspected a couple times a year, and the emergency lighting should be inspected a couple times year. The batteries that provide 90 minutes of power backup for the emergency and egress lighting are only good for three or four years.

While it is assumed that they are in working order, the only way to be certain is to have a trained, licensed electrician do a complete test prior to signing on the dotted line.

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