

USB TODAY & TOMORROW: A BUILDER'S GUIDE TO USB CHARGING FOR MODERN HOMES



It's no secret that our world has gone digital – for daily communication, personal and professional transactions, various types of entertainment, and so much more. As of 2020, there are 275.6 million smartphone users in the U.S. alone, and that's just the beginning. Studies report a national average of 11 devices per household, adding an assortment of tablets, laptops, Bluetooth speakers and headphones, portable gaming consoles, and cameras into the mix.



To build houses with today's buyers in mind, it is necessary to accommodate the volume of devices that are part of modern life.

Every single one of the popular devices mentioned above relies on a USB connection to recharge for portable use, and overloading outlets or power strips with bulky adapters is a tactic better left in the past. So, in a culture of ever-growing digital dependency, with buyers looking to support their tech-filled way of life, how can you know your homes are up to the task?

By understanding the current and advancing alternatives to standard outlets that better suit homebuyer needs, both now and in the future.

The built-in charging basics

To start, charging can no longer be an afterthought. When designing a home, placement of outlets to power common appliances comes as second nature; you instinctively plan for the obvious refrigerator, oven and television, as well as the probable hairdryer by the bathroom vanity and alarm clock for the nightstand. So, considering the constant usage of mobile devices today, planning for readily available charging should be no different. And opting for USB outlets in strategic locations is your simple solution.

Showing that you anticipate your customers' needs, outlets with built-in USB ports will help buyers manage life's multitude of electronics and appliances, without ever having to unplug a lamp so they can charge up the tablet. For many homeowners, places of rest and recreation, like bedrooms, living rooms or dens, as well as working spaces, such as offices and kitchens, are all high usage areas. Adding USB outlets in these places where devices are used and charged most frequently is an easy attention-grabbing advantage to offer, especially since USB outlets install as quickly as traditional ones, and are even available with additional feature options to further enhance your homes.

designed to be better.



Futureproofing with USB Type C.



When selecting USB outlets for your builds, it's important to pay attention to the type of USB ports included. The technology landscape is one of ongoing transformation, and we are actually in the midst of a USB transition. For the last few decades, any reference to a USB connection has typically meant USB Type-A. This is the rectangular insert you are undoubtedly most familiar with, the one which many people struggle to plug in the right way on the first try. But for the last few years, another USB connector type has been gaining traction: USB Type-C. It has a smaller, conveniently reversible insert and allows for faster speeds when uploading, downloading and recharging. A steadily increasing number of devices has been launched using this connector type, as it works with newer, robust standards like the USB 3.1 Gen 2 protocol and USB Power Delivery, and the growth is expected to continue, helping to maximize performance and efficiency of various mobile devices. Because of the USB Type-C adoption by technology manufacturers, it's worth noting whether built-in charging options are compatible. While USB Type-A will still be around for the foreseeable future, considering USB outlets that include USB Type-C ports, either exclusively or in addition to a USB Type-A port, can help future-proof your homes for newer and upcoming devices.

Some Qi considerations

While USB Type-C answers the demand for faster, another feature to look out for is all about easier: wireless charging. Between now and 2025, the volume of mobile devices equipped for wireless charging is expected to grow by 45%, and the driving appeal is clutter-free convenience.

The wireless alternative – made possible by inductive charging, and standardized by Qi certification – uses transmitting coils within the devices to deliver power by currents, rather than cables. Simply setting a Qi-enabled device on a compatible charging surface is all it takes. And, thanks to leading brands like Apple and Samsung, a significant percentage of smartphones are already equipped for wireless charging.



This is great news for users sick of wrangling their USB cord and A/C adapter to plug in their phone. But, if they're using a common wireless charging pad, it is still taking up plug-space in an outlet, not to mention space on an end-table or counter. That's why a built-in wireless charging option has added benefit, allowing the customer-pleasing convenience of wireless charging while granting power access to additional devices through a connected outlet and USB port.

An Expectation of Everywhere

Lastly, when evaluating your home layouts, as well as the various USB outlet models you could include, don't forget that modern buyers expect to be able to use their technology everywhere...even outside.

When designing homes with patios, pools, or decks, including power access with built-in USB charging helps create an outdoor environment that is inviting and usable, whether for entertaining or simple relaxation. Just be sure to go for options that have been tailored to the weather-resistant requirements from the National Electrical Code, pairing convenience with safety.

