



Protect Your Home from Fire

Fire prevention devices in danger of being removed from code adoption

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Arlington, VA – Every day in the U.S. 150 homes will start on fire because of electrical issues. Homeowners can take steps to prevent thousands of these fires each year says the Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI) which sponsors May as National Electrical Safety Month. As part of its campaign this year, the foundation is helping consumers to identify and correct electrical fire hazards commonly found in homes. One safety device highlighted in this year's campaign is being touted as the biggest innovation in decades for preventing electrical fires. These devices known as Arc Fault Circuit Interrupters or AFCIs are advanced electronic circuit breakers that detect dangerous conditions in a home's wiring. When a problem is detected, these devices immediately cut the power to the circuit before a fire can start.

“In addition to saving lives, use of AFCI technology in the US will reduce the number of home fires by over 30,000, and prevent nearly \$750 million in property damage each year,” notes Brett Brenner, President of ESFI.

While the recently released 2008 *National Electrical Code*® now requires combination AFCI protection to be included in all new homes constructed, the final decision is left up to individual states to adopt the new Code into law. However, not everyone is excited about the new code. Code adoption is becoming more of a challenge as homebuilders are attacking several of the important fire prevention and safety features added to the new Code, including AFCIs. Homebuilders claim that the new safety features will make homes too expensive. In actuality, the additional cost is estimated to be \$300-\$400 for the average new home.

“It is a small price to pay for decades of fire protection,” points out Brenner.

Organizations who have endorsed AFCI technology include: the United States Fire Administration, the National Fire Protection Association, the Consumer Product Safety Commission, and the National Association of State Fire Marshals. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Healthy Homes report lists the lack of AFCIs among the primary residential hazards associated with burns and fire-related injuries.

More information on AFCIs and other resources relating to National Electrical Safety Month 2008, including a checklist which identifies dangers commonly found in aging homes, are available at www.electrical-safety.org.

The **Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI)** is dedicated exclusively to promoting electrical safety. Established in 1994, ESFI proudly sponsors National Electrical Safety Month each May and focuses on reducing electrically related deaths, injuries and property loss. Funded solely by the industry, ESFI is the leading authority and advocate of electrical safety.

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