



ESFI Urges North Carolina State Board to Reaffirm Commitment to Electrical Fire Safety

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Arlington, VA – The Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI) has issued a call to action to the North Carolina Building Code Council (BCC) to adopt the *2008 National Electrical Code* (NEC) in its entirety - a move that would provide North Carolina residents and their homes with the most advanced electrical fire protection available today.

The BCC will meet on Tuesday, September 15 to reexamine the statewide adoption of the NEC early last year, calling for increased use of arc fault circuit interrupters (AFCI) to prevent deadly electrical fires.

AFCIs are one of the newest and most important advancements in electrical fire protection, and are now required in all new homes under the 2008 NEC. These innovative devices provide enhanced protection against arc faults in a home's wiring – a dangerous condition that cannot be detected by standard breakers and is a leading cause of home fires.

“Since the probability of electrical fires increases as homes age, requiring the inclusion of AFCI provisions in state electrical codes will ensure that new homes will enjoy fire protection for decades to come,” explained Brett Brenner, president of ESFI.

The Consumer Product Safety Commission estimates that nearly 50 percent of home electrical fires could be prevented with AFCI technology. Currently, 28 states have voted to expand or maintain existing requirements for AFCI installation.

Earlier this year, a state-appointed panel of fire and electrical safety experts recommended that the state of North Carolina adopt the *2008 National Electrical Code*, which calls for the increased use of AFCIs in the home. However, state and national safety advocates remain concerned that the BCC could vote to overturn the current AFCI requirements.

“The fact is, AFCIs protect and save lives – plain and simple,” said Brenner. “The minimal cost associated with installation is insignificant when compared with the hundreds of deaths, thousands of injuries and millions of dollars lost in electrical fires in the U.S. each year.”

The Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI) is a 501(c)(3) organization dedicated exclusively to promoting electrical safety in the home, school and workplace. ESFI sponsors National Electrical Safety Month each May, and engages in public education campaigns throughout the year to prevent electrical fatalities, injuries, and property damage. To learn more about ESFI, visit www.electrical-safety.org.

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