

## The Electrical Safety Foundation International

1300 North 17<sup>th</sup> Street, 17<sup>th</sup> Floor, Rosslyn, VA 22209  
Phone: (703)841-3229  
www.electrical-safety.org



Contact: Brett Brenner  
Phone: (703) 841-3296  
Email: Brett.Brenner@esfi.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

# Number of Home Electrocutions Cut in Half

Decades after they first appeared in US homes, GFCIs are still saving lives

Arlington, VA – Each year, the Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI) sponsors the month of May as National Electrical Safety Month. As part of this year's campaign, the foundation is highlighting a safety device that has saved thousands of lives since first being introduced. While the current *National Electrical Code*® requires that these electrical outlets known as Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters be installed in all newly constructed homes, this life saving technology has never been added to many older homes. For National Electrical Safety Month 2008, the foundation is encouraging owners of aging homes to check to see if their home is protected and to safeguard their families by installing GFCIs if not.

Found mostly in areas around the home where electrical products might come in contact with water such as bathrooms, kitchens, and outdoors, a GFCI is a special type of outlet designed to trip before a deadly electrical shock can occur. GFCIs are credited for reducing residential electrocutions by more than 50% over the last two decades. However, homes built more than fifteen years ago are not likely to be protected by GFCIs.

"It is an issue that many people take for granted," notes Brett Brenner, President of ESFI. "If GFCIs were installed in every U.S. household, nearly 70 percent of the approximately 400 electrocutions that occurred last year could have been prevented."

Installation is only part of the issue. GFCIs are subject to wear and possible damage (as from a strong power surge during an electrical storm) and should be tested once a month and after electrical storms to make sure that they are offering shock protection. Testing is important because the outlet will still work like normal even though the GFCI is no longer functioning correctly. As part of its National Electrical Safety Month's materials, ESFI is providing homeowners with simple and easy instructions on how they can test their GFCIs to see if they are working properly. These instructions and other resources relating to National Electrical Safety Month 2008, including a checklist which identifies other dangers commonly found in older homes, are available at [www.electrical-safety.org](http://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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