

Get Informed about Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFCIs)

Since the 1970s, GFCIs have saved thousands of lives and have helped cut the number of home electrocutions in half. Even today's modern electrical devices are subject to the basic principles of electricity. One of the most important being – water and electricity don't mix! Luckily, there is a technology available to help protect you from this shocking hazard.

What is a ground fault?

- A ground fault is an unintentional electrical path between a power source and a grounded surface.
- These leakage currents usually occur when an electrical appliance is damaged or the electrical parts are wet, causing electrical current to flow outside of the circuit conductors.
- If your body provides a path to the ground for this current, you could be burned, severely shocked, or electrocuted.

What are ground fault circuit interrupters, or GFCIs?

- GFCIs are electrical safety devices that are designed to protect people from electric shock and electrocution.
- GFCIs prevent deadly shock by quickly shutting off power to the circuit if the electricity flowing into the circuit differs by even a slight amount from that returning, indicating a loss of current.
- Typically, GFCIs are installed in areas where water and electricity are in close proximity, such as the bathroom, kitchen, garage, basement, and outdoors.
- They are especially useful for cord-connected appliances and equipment used outdoors or near water.

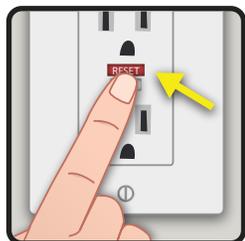
How much do GFCIs cost?

- GFCI outlets are generally fairly inexpensive, starting under \$15.

Can I install them myself?

- GFCIs should only be installed by a licensed, qualified electrician.
- Portable GFCIs require no tools to install and provide flexibility in using receptacles that are not GFCI protected. They are commonly used outdoors.

Follow these simple steps to test your GFCIs every month to be sure they are properly functioning:



1. Push the "reset" button on the GFCI to prepare the outlet



2. Plug an ordinary nightlight into the GFCI and turn it ON. The light should now be on.



3. Push the "test" button of the GFCI. The nightlight should turn OFF.



4. Push the "reset" button again. The nightlight should now go ON again.



5. If the nightlight does not turn off when the "test" button is pushed, then the GFCI is not properly protecting you from shock or electrocution. Contact a licensed electrician to check the GFCI and correct the problem.