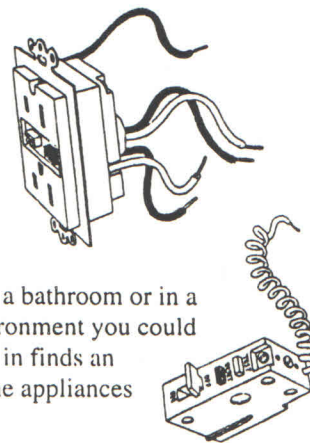


➤ GFCI's – PLUGGING IN TO ELECTRICAL SAFETY

Upgrade your electrical system with GFCI Protection

A ground fault circuit interrupter is an electrical device, either a receptacle (wall plug socket) or a circuit breaker (in the electric panel) which is designed to protect people from electric shock in a wet or damp environment. Ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCI) have been around since the early seventies. However older homes, even if there has been remodeling, and sometimes even newer homes, are constructed without the benefit of these safety devices.



Suppose for a moment that you decide to use an electrical appliance in a bathroom or in a garage that does not have a GFCI-protected receptacle. In a damp environment you could be badly shocked or even electrocuted if the appliance you've plugged in finds an electrical path to ground through your body. This can happen with some appliances even if they are not themselves damaged.

If an appliance is plugged into a GFCI-protected circuit, the electric current passing through the circuit is carefully monitored by the GFCI device. If the current varies by more than 5 milliamps (5 thousandths of an ampere – an amount so small that normal people may never notice it) the circuit is shut off immediately, preventing injury or death.

If your house does not have GFCI protection an electrician can add it, usually easily and at very modest cost. This is an important safety improvement. Electrical wiring and device installation should be handled by a qualified electrician. In many areas electricians are licensed.

Where to look for GFCI protection

- All outdoor receptacles that are within 6 feet of the ground, and receptacles at hot tubs and spas; receptacles and equipment around swimming pools
- All bathroom receptacles
- All garage receptacles within reach except one marked and used for a freezer
- Receptacles within 6 feet of the kitchen sink
- One or more receptacles in the basement or crawl space areas
- Receptacles and supplies for fountain or pool pumps and related equipment
- Regardless of Code requirements, we suggest that wet bars and lighting in high-risk areas such as where easily touched while standing in a spa, bath tub or shower should all be protected.

Effective dates of some Electrical Code requirements

January 1, 1973–GFCI's required for outdoor receptacles. February 5, 1976–added bathroom receptacles. April 2, 1980–added garage receptacles. July 30, 1986–added one in basement and near kitchen sink. May 18, 1990–current: bathrooms, some bathroom lighting, garage receptacles, outdoor receptacles, basement receptacles, unfinished area crawl space and basement receptacles, kitchen receptacles near sink, boathouse receptacles, pool, spa, hot tub receptacles, equipment, lighting, and fixtures, and hydromassage bathtubs.



Other more complete suggestions for protection, and some detailed exceptions to the general rules above are found in the current edition National Electric Code published by the National Fire Protection Association, 1-800-344-3555.

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