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## FIRE ORGANIZATIONS SEEKS ENHANCED BUILDING CODE REQUIREMENTS FOR FAULT CIRCUIT INTERRUPTERS

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Generally used in loadcenters, panelboards, or similar device for electrical circuit protection, circuit breakers are available for a wide range of applications. The addition of Arc-Fault Circuit Interrupters (AFCI) represents a major improvement in electrical fire safety. Innovative safety device designed to prevent death and destruction caused by electrical fires.

(SALEM, Ore.) - The Oregon Fire Marshals Association and the National Fire Protection Association today issued a call to action to officials with the state's Electrical Specialty Code Review Committee to recommend expanding the state's requirement for "AFCIs", *arc fault circuit interrupters*- an innovative home safety device designed to prevent home electrical fires.

An AFCI is an advanced form of a simple circuit breaker that detects a dangerous condition in a home's electrical system, which left uncorrected, can lead to an electrical fire.

"Arc fault circuit interrupters are a technological leap forward in home safety. The proven safety device has strong potential to save hundreds of lives and hundreds of millions of dollars in property lost in electrical fires each year in the U.S.," said Raymond Bizal, western regional manager for the NFPA.

"Oregon residents deserve the safest home possible, and updating the electrical code to the national consensus standard for this potentially life-saving technology will help to ensure the highest level of safety."

In a public hearing to be held Thursday, January 10th, Oregon's Electrical Specialty Code Review Committee will discuss the 2008 National Electrical Code®, in particular the requirements for AFCIs. The Committee's recommendations will be reviewed by the state's Electrical and Elevator Board.

The NEC®, the country's most universally adopted construction code, has more than a 100 year track record of providing electrical safety for millions of Americans through regular revisions that incorporate the latest in safety technology. The NFPA is the sponsor of the NEC® development process and publishes the document, but its safety requirements do not automatically become effective unless the Code is adopted through a state, municipal or other legislative process.

AFCIs have been required by the NEC® since 1999. Oregon currently requires builders and electricians to install the device on bedroom circuits during all new home construction. If the state adopts the newly published 2008 NEC®, AFCI use will expand to other areas of the home, significantly increasing the level of protection to the home's electrical system, therefore decreasing the risk of an electrical fire from occurring.

"It is clear there is strong support for AFCIs in Oregon, and we ask the Building Codes Division to keep the best interests of Oregon homeowners in mind and make home safety a priority," said Eric McMullen, OFMA president. "The expansion of this important electrical code requirement will bring the state to the forefront of fire and electrical safety."

In addition to the NFPA, several other national fire and electrical safety organizations support the expanded code requirement, including the Electrical Safety Foundation International, the International Association of Electrical Inspectors and the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC). In fact, the CPSC believes that the device, if installed in all homes, could prevent more than 50 percent of electrical fires from occurring.

Each year in the U.S., electrical fires take the lives of 485 people, injure 2,300 others and destroy more than \$868 million in property, according to data from the United States Fire Administration (USFA). To learn more about AFCIs, visit [AFCIsafety.org](http://AFCIsafety.org).