



## **Breakers get new standard**

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By Tim Feran

The Ohio Board of Building Standards has voted to adopt the 2008 National Electrical Code, a move aimed at making new homes in Ohio safer from the threat of electrical fires.

The standards went into effect Jan. 1.

The national electrical code requires a special circuit breaker -- called an arc-fault circuit interrupter or AFCI -- on circuits for bedrooms, living rooms, sunrooms and other areas where families gather or sleep.

Ohio's old code required the interrupter on bedroom circuits only.

The interrupter can provide more protection than a standard circuit breaker by detecting an arc fault, which can occur when damaged wiring or overheated or worn electrical cords come in contact with vibrating metal or damaged electrical appliances.

The high heat from arc faults can ignite surrounding material such as wood framing or insulation. An AFCI will shut down a circuit when it detects a problem.

The expanded use of AFCIs is supported by the Ohio Chapter of the International Association of Electrical Inspectors, the National Fire Protection Association, the National Association of State Fire Marshals, the Electrical Safety Foundation International and the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission.

In addition to expanding AFCI protection, the new code requires the installation of tamper-proof receptacles that prevent children from sticking items into the slots of electrical outlets.