

## Building Code Council upholds circuit-breaker rule

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Raleigh, N.C. — The North Carolina Building Code Council voted Tuesday to continue requiring special circuit-breakers in new homes.

An arc fault circuit interrupter (AFCI) is a circuit-breaker that can detect an irregular electrical current and shut it off before it ignites a fire. Firefighters say AFCIs could help prevent fires and save lives.

The state has required AFCIs in nearly every room of new homes since January – previously, they were required only in bedrooms – but home builders had asked lawmakers to have the code council to reconsider the rule.

Some home builders say expanded AFCI use is unneeded because codes already prevent electrical fires.

They also said AFCIs cost about \$35 more than regular circuit-breakers, meaning an estimated \$19 million a year would be spent on AFCIs – costs that would be passed on to home buyers.

Existing homes can be retrofitted with AFCIs. A homeowner would need to hire a professional electrician to find out if the home's wiring is compatible.

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Arc fault circuit interrupters are like circuit breakers that can detect an irregular electrical current.