



## Fire Officials Want Circuit Breakers in New Homes

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**North Carolina** - Fire officials and electrical experts called a news conference Thursday to drum up support for a building code change designed to prevent fires. Raleigh Fire Chief John McGrath said at the news conference at Fire Station 1 in Durham that there are as many as 70,000 electrical fires a year in the U.S. that could be prevented with a special type of circuit breaker.

"This small device is a very very inexpensive way to prevent a lot of them," McGrath said.

The device, an arc fault circuit interrupter, is now required in bedrooms in new homes. In January it will be required for most rooms in new homes.

The N.C. Building Code Council, which sets building standards, is moving to undo the new requirements. Home builders say the device is too expensive and is an unnecessary protection.

Kim Reitterer, a Charlotte electrical engineer and member of the code council, said the devices would add at most \$30 to \$60 to the cost of a \$150,000 square-foot home.

"This is pennies, or less than pennies, for an important safety device, Reitterer said.

The council meets Monday and Tuesday in Raleigh. Among its agenda items is a vote that could begin unravelling the new building code.

Written by The News and Observer