

This information brought to you by

Andrew Rook

Contact me for home inspections for buyers, sellers, or investors.

25 Bonacci Drive
Hamilton, NJ 08690

Andrew@RookInspections.com

Phone: 609.588.0125

Fax: 609.838.0912

RookInspections.com

Hints from Heloise

Circuit breaker can help save lives

DEAR HELOISE:

You covered GFCIs (ground-fault circuit-interrupters) in a column. They have saved many from shock or electrocution, and should be installed in all parts of the home where electrical appliances are used near water, such as in the kitchen, bathroom, laundry or outdoors.

However, they do not prevent fires any better than an ordinary circuit breaker. A new device, the arc-fault circuit breaker (AFCB), does that extremely well. When arcing (electrical sparking) occurs, such as in the strands of a frayed power cord, often the current drawn is insufficient to cause the circuit breaker to trip open. Still, the electrical arc can cause a fire. A toaster shows that under certain conditions wires can get hot enough to ignite combustibles without causing an overload that will trip the breaker.

The AFCB will sense the dangerous arcing condition and trip the circuit breaker regardless of the amount of current. This will prevent fires from one of the most common electrical causes, associated with more than 40,000 residential fires and 350 deaths annually. AFCBs are desirable wherever cords are used, such as in bedrooms and living rooms.

—Arthur Freund; retired senior editor, *Electrical Construction and Maintenance Magazine*,
Montclair, N.J.

DEAR MR. FREUND: Thank you for a potentially lifesaving letter.

—Heloise

San Diego Union-Tribune, January 26, 2006, p. E10.