

Safety First



SDREA Loss Control

GFCIs Save Lives

Technology has done great things for improving the electrical safety in our homes. Safety devices that can be found in almost any home today can help save lives lost to electrocution, but they cannot help if people do not know what they are or how to use them.

A GFCI is a device that helps prevent electric shock by measuring the amount of current that goes in and out of a circuit. If any small leakage of a current from the circuit is detected, the device will then shut off the current to prevent that leak from finding an alternative path for the electricity to travel on.

That leaking current can travel through water, or through humans, which is why it is so important to have them in your home.

GFCIs are now required to be installed into new homes in any room that may be within six feet of water. This means you will find them in outlets in kitchens, bathrooms, garages, outdoor outlets and other places prone to contact with water.

Even if you do not know what a GFCI is, you have most likely seen one before. They are most recognizable on wall outlets and the parts of the outlet that you can see and use are the test and reset buttons.

The way to make sure that your GFCIs are working properly is to plug something into the outlet, like a nightlight. Then hit the test button on the outlet and the light should go out. Then push the reset button and the power should come back on. If the power was not disconnected and reconnected like it should have, contact an electrician to take a look at your outlets.

GFCIs may also be found on circuit breakers in your panel box. They are also now found on some appliances that you use near water, like hairdryers.

If you have an older home and have never had either of these installed, then check a local hardware store for portable GFCIs, which require no training to install. All you do is plug it into the wall outlet and then plug your electronic products into the GFCI.