



DAVE WINDSOR ANSWERS YOUR REAL ESTATE QUESTIONS

Don't Be Shocked By This

Dear Dave: I have known about GFI requirements in a home for some time, but I just learned that AFCI's are also required. Could you please explain?

Answer: A Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter (GFCI) protects you from an accident where you, the human being, might 'ground' an electrical circuit with your body.

The most likely case is where an electrical current may come in contact with water and you are personally connected to the water at the same time – e.g. your electric toaster falls into the kitchen sink while you are washing dishes.

This is why all kitchen counter top outlets, and even some island outlets near the counter, must have GFCI protection, as well as all bathroom and home exterior outlets. Should you or your children create a grounding from an electric current, the circuit will shut off in 1/40000th (one forty thousandth) of a second. Good news for people using electric hair dryers in the bathtub.

An 'arc' of electricity is a different story. An electrical arc is an interruption of the normal flow of electricity in a circuit which can cause a fire. Natural arcs occur whenever a light switch is turned

on or off, but other arcing (e.g. a shorting between wires) can be very dangerous and is not protected by a conventional circuit breaker.

An AFCI is, in effect, a newer type of circuit breaker, required in all new construction since 2002, and now in all homes since 2010. A home inspection should raise this issue if your electrical panel does not meet the code.

An AFCI is not necessary on a circuit which already has a GFCI but is required on all other household circuits. In summary, the primary purpose of a GFCI is to protect people personally contacting an electrical circuit. An AFCI is primarily designed to prevent an electrical fire.

Dear Dave: We are putting up a greenhouse in the back yard. How far from the property line does it have to be?

Answer: As long as it is a temporary structure, not on a permanent foundation, it doesn't matter, unless you live in a subdivision with specific covenants restricting outbuildings. If it has a foundation, then it depends on the Zoning of the property (normally 10 feet at the rear and 5 feet at the side in Residential neighborhoods).

What you do want to watch out for

is easements on your property. Try to keep your greenhouse out of any designated easements as utility companies have a permanent right to access that portion of your property. Easements will be shown on your as-built survey. Never encroach on those areas with any structure that has a permanent foundation and, if your greenhouse encroaches, keep in mind it could be necessary to move it if access is required by the beneficiary of the easement.

Dave

Windsor

