



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Brett Brenner
703.841.3296

GFCIs Protect from Shock this Holiday Season

Arlington, VA – With more than 400 million devices installed nationwide, Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFCIs) have been credited with reducing the number of electrocutions dramatically in the last 25 years. The Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI) reminds consumers to test their GFCIs receptacles every month, especially during the holiday season.

Most often installed in kitchens, bathrooms, and outdoors, GFCIs are designed to minimize shock and electrocution, especially when electrical appliances inadvertently come in contact with water. If a GFCI senses minimal current leakage in an electrical circuit, it assumes a ground fault has occurred. It then automatically disconnects the power.

In spite of their widespread use and life saving abilities, a recent ESFI study found that 60% of Americans were not familiar with the term GFCI and of those familiar with the term 44% rarely, if ever, test them.

As the number of visitors in your home increases over the holidays and electrical decorations are put up inside and out, be sure to test your GFCIs. Like all electrical devices, GFCIs can be damaged or wear out. Testing GFCI receptacles is the only way to ensure they are working properly. The GFCI outlet may continue to function, even if the GFCI protection no longer works.

For simple steps on how to test your GFCI outlets, visit ESFI at www.holidaysafety.org.

ESFI also recommends the following tips for using GFCIs this holiday season:

- For electric shock protection, plug outdoor lights and electric decorations into circuits protected by GFCIs.
- A GFCI should be used in any area where water may come in contact with electrical products. GFCIs are now required by code in certain areas of the home, including unfinished basements, kitchens, bathrooms, bedrooms, garages, crawl spaces and around swimming pools.
- Power surges and electrical storms may damage GFCIs, preventing them from working properly. Monthly testing GFCIs is a good safety practice.

GFCIs are important to you and your family's safety at home this holiday season. Without performing this simple GFCI test you are risking the possibility of serious injury or even death.

ESFI reminds everyone that electricity is a powerful tool. It can also be a lethal hazard. Better safety standards have reduced electrical hazards that cause deaths, injuries and property damage. But good safety habits are still the best prevention against electrical hazards.

For more holiday electrical safety information, please visit ESFI at: www.holidaysafety.org.

###