

The Electrical Safety Foundation International

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Ohio is once again getting National Attention

Controversy over new Code is forcing national organizations to respond

Arlington, VA – What started as a routine year for the electrical industry has turned into a full debate involving the Governor, home builders, manufacturers and safety organizations. Since January's adoption of the new *National Electrical Code*, which is updated every three years, home builders in Ohio have been actively working to get it overturned. They complain that the additional costs to comply with the new code would make new homes unaffordable, and they have even presented the Governor with a petition to annul Ohio's adoption of the 2008 Code reverting the state back to an older version. This controversy has caused fire, safety and electrical industry officials to descend on Columbus. Among them is the Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI) who is working to help Ohio residents understand that the new code will save lives and homes. The foundation and many others are also quick to point out that arguments against the new code are based on inaccurate information.

Each year, home electrical problems account for nearly 70,000 home fires. These fires cause close to 500 deaths, injure more than 2,000 people, and account for \$868 million in property damage. "Everyday almost 200 homes catch fire because of electrical issues," says Brett Brenner, President of ESFI. "While we put a figure to the damage these fires cause to property, the damage to lives is incalculable. The new Code will prevent thousands of these fires and protect homes for decades to come."

In their petition to Governor Strickland, the Ohio Home Builder's Association alleges that complying with the new Code would add \$600 - \$1,200 to the average new home. However, an analysis by Ohio's electrical inspectors points out that the additional cost is really less than \$200 a home. This lower cost is also endorsed by the Electrical Code Coalition as being more accurate. The coalition is a group of industry organizations consisting of safety experts, inspectors, contractors, and utilities, who have partnered together to promote electrical safety in Ohio.

"This whole debate should be centered on what this all means to Ohio's families," points out Brenner. "Everyone agrees that the new code provides fire protection that is unequalled. But, if the new Code is not enforced, Ohio will be taking a step backwards in fire prevention."

The Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI) is the leading authority and advocate of electrical safety. Established in 1994, ESFI proudly sponsors National Electrical Safety Month each May and focuses on reducing electrically related deaths, injuries and property loss.

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