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Contact: Taylor W. Wells (254) 745-2540 taylor.wells@mrelectric.com

Number of Home Electrocutions Cut in Half

Decades after they first appeared in US homes, GFCIs are still saving lives

Each year, the Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI) and Mr. Electric® sponsor the month of May as National Electrical Safety Month. As part of this year's campaign, the foundation and *Mr. Electric* are highlighting a safety device that has saved thousands of lives since first being introduced.

While the current *National Electrical Code*® requires these electrical outlets known as Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFCIs) be installed in all newly constructed homes, this lifesaving technology has never been added to many older homes.

For National Electrical Safety Month 2008, ESFI and *Mr. Electric* encourage owners of aging homes to check to see if their home is protected and to safeguard their families by installing GFCIs.

“Found mostly in areas around the home where electrical products might come in contact with water such as bathrooms, kitchens, and outdoors, a GFCI is a special type of outlet designed to trip before a deadly electrical shock can occur,” said Jeff Meyers, president of *Mr. Electric*. “GFCIs are credited for reducing residential electrocutions by more than 50% over the last two decades.”

However, homes built more than 15 years ago are not likely to be protected by GFCIs. “It is an issue that many people take for granted,” notes Brett Brenner, president of ESFI. “If GFCIs were installed in every U.S. household, nearly 70 percent of the approximately 400 electrocutions that occurred last year could have been prevented.”

Installation is only part of the issue. GFCIs are subject to wear and possible damage (as from a strong power surge during an electrical storm) and should be tested once a month and after electrical storms to make sure that they are offering shock protection. Testing is important because the outlet will still work like normal even though the GFCI is no longer functioning correctly. As part of its National Electrical Safety Month's materials, ESFI is providing homeowners with GFCI testing instructions.

These instructions and other resources, including a checklist which identifies other dangers commonly found in older homes, are available at www.electrical-safety.org.

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The Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI) is dedicated exclusively to promoting 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. Funded solely by the industry, ESFI is the leading authority and advocate of electrical safety.

About Mr. Electric®:

Established in 1994, *Mr. Electric* is a global franchise organization providing electrical installation and repair services. Recognized by *Entrepreneur* magazine among its “Franchise 500,” *Mr. Electric* franchisees provide these services to both residential and commercial customers at over 200 locations worldwide. *Mr. Electric* is a subsidiary of The Dwyer Group, Inc. For further information or to find the location nearest you, visit www.mrelectric.com.