



Circuit Breaker Arc-Fault Circuit Interrupters (AFCIs) – Myth vs. Fact

Cost

Myth: AFCI circuit breakers required in new home construction can cost \$3,000+ per home, making them unaffordable.

Fact: The average cost for an AFCI circuit breaker is \$38 (according to a NEMA blind survey for 2017 HUD Manufactured Housing Construction Safety Standards), or approx. \$300 to protect a new 2,000-square-foot, four-bedroom home from electrical fires caused by electrical arcing. That’s about 83 cents per month to protect a family from electrical fires over a 30-year mortgage. In contrast, material and hefty labor costs associated with installing a home builder upgrade like granite countertops averages around [\\$4,500](#), or \$12.50 per month over the same period. The [National League of Cities](#) recently indicated home builder “labor and land costs are by far the biggest construction expenses nationwide,” resulting in rapidly rising home prices.

Appliance Compatibility

Myth: AFCI circuit breakers are not compatible with common household appliances.

Fact: AFCI circuit breakers work extremely well with new appliances that meet U.S. product safety standards. Some older appliances may incorporate components that predate current product safety standards or have operational characteristics that are not compatible with AFCI protection. Counterfeit appliances or those not certified by a Nationally Recognized Testing Laboratory (NRTL) may also be incompatible with AFCI circuit breakers.

AFCI/GFCI Compatibility

Myth: AFCI circuit breaker and Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFCIs) won’t work together.

Fact: AFCI circuit breakers and GFCIs complement and function well together in providing electrical safety and fire protection throughout a home. Both devices are required by the 2017 National Electrical Code® because they provide different, but critically important, protection. AFCI circuit breakers detect dangerous arcing in a home’s wiring and stop electrical fires before they can start. GFCIs are required in rooms like kitchens, bathrooms and laundry rooms where water is present and help prevent possible shock and electrocution. There are dual function AFCI/GFCI circuit breakers on the market today that provide both types of protection in one device.

Product Availability

Myth: AFCI circuit breakers are hard to find.

Fact: Several companies manufacture AFCI circuit breakers for consumers to choose from. AFCI circuit breakers can be purchased at electrical supply houses, home improvement stores, and online.

AFCI Lifespan

Myth: AFCI circuit breakers only last one year or need frequent replacement.

Fact: AFCI circuit breakers are tested and certified to extremely rigorous U.S. product safety standards. When installed correctly, AFCI circuit breakers are expected to last the life of a standard circuit breaker under normal operating conditions. AFCI circuit breakers also carry a manufacturer’s warranty.