

Electrical requirements in the Indiana Code

In Indiana we have a unique process by which we adopt and amend a code. In fact, Indiana is light years ahead of most other states and we have become a model for other states that want to have the same process. In Indiana we take the phrase “To provide minimum requirements to safeguard the public safety, health and general welfare, through affordability, structural strength, means of egress facilities, stability, sanitation, light and ventilation, energy conservation and safety to life and property from fire and other hazards attributed to the built environment” seriously.....This statement is taken directly from the International Residential Code, Section R101.3...Purpose.

For years, code review committees established by the State of Indiana have adopted and amended sections of various codes with careful consideration for safety and affordability.

This article will tip the iceberg on the subject “Electrical Requirements”, and I mean just tip. In recent years, Indiana has tackled the issue regarding Arc Fault Circuit Interrupters (AFCI). They were introduced into the model codes to go into affect the following year after adoption of that code — while they were still in the “manufacturing” and “testing” stages.

I won't go into the details of how they got into the Indiana Residential Code, but they did, for a short time. In that time, there were numerous complaints regarding these breakers (an arc fault breaker being the only way you could comply with the code), most of which involved nuisance tripping. Along with the nuisance tripping there were other “manufacturer requirements” that were a nuisance.....ie:

1. As a homeowner, if a breaker tripped once you could reset it, but if it tripped a second time, you had to call a licensed electrician to investigate the problem.

2. Once a “fault” had occurred, indicated by wiring “marked” with carbon, it was recommended that the wiring be replaced either from the breaker to the fault, or whichever part of the wiring could be replaced entirely from point A to point B in the circuit. This means it could be from outlet to outlet if you knew where the fault occurred.

3. The life expectancy of AFCI is 5 years, which meant that every 5 years you had to replace the breaker.

4. There was not an electrical tester on the market to test to see if the breakers were working properly. This doesn't sound “affordable” to me. Fortunately AFCI were removed from the Indiana Residential Code.

Recently there was another attempt to reinstate the breakers back into the Indiana Residential Code, along with tamper-resistant receptacles, through review and amendment of the National Electrical Code, also known as the Indiana Electrical Code. Due to the fiscal impact of these provisions, AFCI and tamper-resistant receptacles are not included in the proposed rules recently published by the state's Fire Prevention and Building Safety Commission.

The first proposed rule, LSA Document #09-139, amends 675 IAC 14-4.3, the 2005 Indiana Residential Code, so as not to be in conflict with provisions of the 2009 Indiana Electrical Code, 675 IAC 17-1.8.

The second proposed rule, LSA Document #09-140, adds 675 IAC 17-1.8, adopts by reference and amends the 2008 National Electrical Code as the Indiana Electrical Code, 2009 Edition and repeals 675 IAC 17-1.7.

A few of the proposed changes include bubble covers in wet locations; weather-resistant receptacles in both damp and wet loca-

Codes Corner

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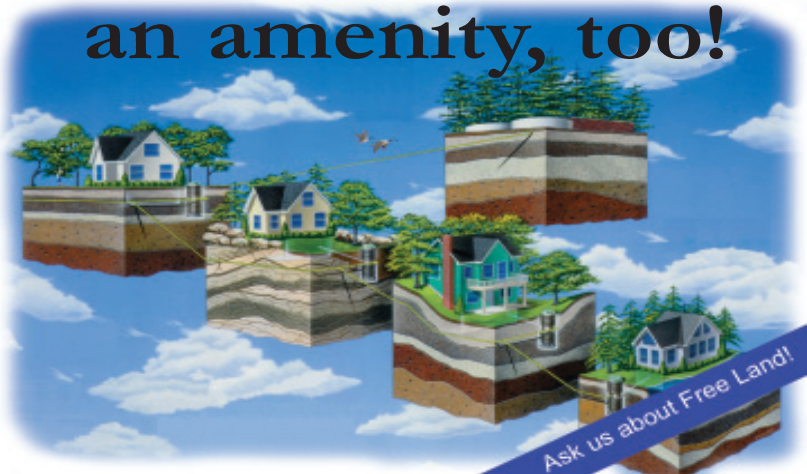
Codes Committee Chairperson

tions; a GFCI receptacle required within any deck, balcony, or porch accessible from the inside of the house that has a usable area of 20 square feet or more; HVAC convenience receptacle required within 25 feet of the outside condenser unit, and all garage receptacles are to be GFCI protected.

To comment on these proposed changes or for copies of the proposed rules contact Carlie at 800-377-6334 or Carlie@BuildIndiana.org.

With the adoption of each subsequent code, the requirements get more stringent with regards to practices and methods. IBA members must remain active on IBA's Codes Committee and continue to volunteer to serve on the state's code review committee to preserve safety and affordability for Indiana's homeowners.

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