

Tamper-resistant Electrical Receptacles

What are tamper-resistant electrical receptacles and what is the new requirement?

The *National Electrical Code*® (NEC®) requires new and renovated dwellings to have tamper-resistant (TR) receptacles. These receptacles have spring-loaded shutters that close off the contact openings, or slots, of the receptacles. When a plug is inserted into the receptacle, both springs are compressed and the shutters then open, allowing for the metal prongs to make contact to create an electrical circuit. Because both springs must be compressed at the same time, the shutters do not open when a child attempts to insert an object into only one contact opening, and there is no contact with electricity. Tamper-resistant receptacles are an important next step to making the home a safer place for children.

Why require tamper-resistant electrical receptacles?

Young children are at risk for shock or burns resulting from an outlet or receptacle.

If homeowners do not have children, are TR receptacles required?

Yes. Owners or tenants of homes and apartments change frequently. In addition, exposure to electrical shock and burn accidents are not limited to a child's own home. Children visit homes of relatives and friends who don't have children of their own. This requirement ensures all new homes and apartments are safe for children, whether the home is their own or they are there on a temporary basis.

Do TR receptacles require greater insertion strength than standard receptacles?

TR receptacles require comparable force to other receptacles. The insertion force may vary depending on the newness of the device to the shape or style of the plug being inserted.

Are TR receptacles costly?

No. The projected cost of a TR receptacle adds about \$0.50 to the cost of an unprotected receptacle. Based on current statistics, the average home has about 75 receptacles resulting in an overall added cost of under \$40. This amount may vary slightly based on the type and style of TR receptacle used. This minimal increase in cost buys a significant increase in electrical safety for children.



Shouldn't people accept responsibility for their children and teach their children not to stick items in receptacles?

Accidents involving children and receptacles cannot be blamed entirely on parents. They involve people who look away for a moment, only to face undue tragedy and pain as the result of a child's curiosity. The NEC's mission is to provide electrical safety in the home. TR receptacles are a simple and easy way to protect children from serious injuries that continue to happen every year.

Why are TR receptacles preferred over products such as receptacles with caps or with sliding receptacle covers?

Receptacle caps may be lost and also may be a choking hazard for some ages. Children can learn to defeat sliding receptacle covers when they watch their parents. TR receptacles provide security against the insertion of objects other than cord plugs into the energized parts.

What is the NEC?

The NEC is the *National Electrical Code*. The NEC's mission is to provide practical safeguards from the hazards that arise from using electricity. It is the most widely adopted safety code in the United States and the world, and it is the benchmark for safe electrical installations. The NEC is an evolving document, developed through an open consensus process. A new edition is issued every three years.



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