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ESFI Urges GFCI Check After Storms

(Arlington, Va.)- When did you last test your ground fault circuit interrupter? If you can't recall, the Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI) reminds consumers that it's a good idea to do so at least once a month and after electrical storms.

Ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) are electrical safety devices that trip electrical circuits when they detect leakage currents. A GFCI can be an electrical receptacle, circuit breaker, or portable device. They are especially useful for cord-connected appliances and equipment that are used outdoors or near water .

"Power surges and electrical storms may damage GFCIs, preventing them from working properly," noted Anne Mayberry, ESFI Program Manager. "Regularly testing GFCIs is a good safety practice."

The GFCI test is simple. Plug a nightlight into a GFCI-protected outlet and turn it on. Press the "TEST" button; the light should turn off. Press the "RESET" button; the light should turn on. If the light does not go out when the "TEST" button is pressed, discontinue use of this circuit and contact a qualified electrician to correct the problem.

Leakage currents occur when an electrical appliance is damaged or the electrical parts are wet and electrical current flows outside of the circuit conductors. If a person becomes part of the path for the leakage current, he or she will be shocked or electrocuted. GFCIs look for very small leakage currents and act quickly to shut off the circuit after detecting them. By interrupting the flow of electricity, GFCIs may prevent serious injury or death.

For more information on GFCIs and electrical safety, visit the ESFI website, www.electrical-safety.org or telephone, 703-841-3229.

Founded in 1994 through a joint effort between Underwriters Laboratories Inc. (UL), the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) and the National Electrical Manufacturers Association (NEMA), the Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI) is North America's only non-profit organization dedicated exclusively to promoting electrical safety in the home, school and workplace. ESFI is a 501(c)(3) organization funded by electrical manufacturers and distributors, independent testing laboratories, utilities, safety and consumer groups, and trade and labor associations. ESFI sponsors National Electrical Safety Month each May, and engages in public

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education campaigns and proactive media relations to help reduce property damage, personal injury and death due to electrical accidents. The Foundation does not engage in code or standard writing or lobbying and does not solicit individuals.

For additional electrical safety information, visit the Foundation's web site at www.electrical-safety.org or call 703-841-3229.

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