

## Ask the electrician's wife...

Often I hear my husband ("Chuck") say this..."The customer called to tell me that there was no power at the kitchen plugs!" You can check obvious things yourself. Here's what to do:

The National Electrical Code now requires that kitchen counter, bathroom, garage and most exterior plugs be GFI protected ("ground fault circuit interruption"). GFI protection is provided by a GFI receptacle, i.e. plug, which has two buttons on it—"reset" and "test." If you have a tripped GFI receptacle, the reset button will be sticking out. Push it back in. If power is restored and the GFI receptacle doesn't trip any more, you've probably corrected the situation. Sometimes your GFI plug may be hiding behind a large wall decoration or other object, so make sure you look everywhere.



Example of ↑  
GFI receptacle

To reset a circuit breaker, including a GFI circuit breaker, you should note that the circuit breaker has been tripped. Usually when a circuit breaker trips, it's an indication of a short circuit or overload condition, or in the case of a GFI breaker, a ground fault condition. These conditions must be removed before the circuit breaker can be reset.

Short circuits can be caused by appliances or lamps plugged into receptacles. If everything was working fine until you plugged in appliance "X," or recently purchased a "cool" light fixture from a garage sale and your circuit breaker trips, it is highly likely that that newly added appliance or light is tripping the circuit breaker.

Overload conditions occur frequently in winter time when space heaters are plugged into heavily loaded circuits, such as bathrooms and kitchens. If your circuit breaker is interrupting power after you have plugged in a space heater or other large wattage appliance, you have created an "overload" condition and you will need to find another plug which is on a circuit that has less load on it. Avoid using extension cords when hooking up this appliance to another plug.



To reset a circuit breaker, locate the panel and look for the circuit breaker handle which is one-half way between on and off. Push the circuit breaker handle to the off position completely. You should feel a click and it should stay in the off position. Next, push the circuit breaker handle to the on position. If the circuit breaker doesn't trip, you have successfully restored power. The same procedure applies to a GFI circuit breaker—the circuit breaker that has the button on it.

If after resetting the breaker and unplugging any suspicious appliances or lamps, the circuit breaker trips again, it is time to call us to troubleshoot your problem. I hope this information is helpful to you. —Sandy Fasulo