

Memos from the Code Enforcement Officer:

Electrical Receptacle Outlets.

Questions have been brought to my attention pertaining to the requirements regarding electrical receptacle outlets for the Occupancy Inspection program that are being completed for a transfer of real estate or change in occupancy.

The Code section being referenced is:

International Property Maintenance Code Section 605.1 – Electrical Equipment, Installation; All electrical equipment, wiring and appliances shall be properly installed and maintained in a safe and approved manner.

Do I need to install grounded outlets or GFCI's in my living room or bedroom? The short answer is no. The underlying issue is when outlets are not properly installed from the original 2-prong outlets to modern style 3-prong outlets. Meaning that the equipment ground is to be present at the outlet and protection is provided when utilizing an appliance or equipment with a corresponding plug. If the 3-prong outlets are installed with no ground built into the branch circuit, then alternative methods to meet the applicable code are identified below.

When doing the inspection, the Inspector checks accessible 3-prong receptacle outlets using a handheld tester, lights on the tester indicate if the wiring to the receptacle terminals show an open ground, open neutral, open hot, hot/ground reverse, hot/neutral reverse or if it is correct. When it is indicated on the tester that the wiring is not correct that receptacle is listed as a deficiency on the inspection report to the affect; Receptacle outlet located on the right side of the room to the lower left of the window in the master bedroom showed open ground when tested. Please repair or replace the receptacle with the open ground.

For the issue of open grounds indicated on the tester, a licensed and qualified electrician or handyman will remedy the condition in one of several ways;

- Repair / replace the missing ground
- Replace and revert the 3 prong receptacle outlet back to a 2 prong outlet.
- Install a GFCI receptacle that is properly labeled indicating a lack of equipment ground
- Install a GFCI receptacle properly labeled no equipment ground and properly labeled 3 prong receptacles indicating they are GFCI protected with no equipment ground if controlled by that GFCI

The best solution to any potential electrical concern would be to contact a licensed and qualified electrician to look into the condition further to provide electrical expertise resolving the potential faulty or damaged installation and repairing the receptacle based on current electrical practices and Codes.

If you have additional questions or would like to talk in greater detail please feel free to contact my office at 412-372-3831.

Thank you.

Code Enforcement Officer
Turtle Creek Valley COG