

UN-GROUNDED OR OPEN GROUND RECEPTACLES

3 hole/slot receptacles with no ground wire connection must be GFCI protected, and labeled as such. No exceptions, as mandated by National Electric Code (NEC).

Newer Homes In newer construction (1970's and newer) where the receptacles were originally installed with a ground wire and 3rd lug, any failure of the ground must be corrected by replacing the faulty component or correcting installation errors.

Older Homes In homes built during the 1960's, the original wiring may or may not have ground wire connected to the receptacles, and homes built prior to 1960 almost assuredly did not have ground wires connected to receptacles. These so called **Un-Grounded** receptacles are easily distinguished by their two hole/slot configuration, rather than the newer grounded type of receptacle with three holes/slots. Un-grounded receptacles that have two holes/slots used in a home that was originally wired in this manner (and has not been rewired) are considered acceptable.

BUT...Here's where the problems begin... The problems in older homes start when grounded (three slot) receptacles are used to replace un-grounded (two slot) receptacles, without the necessary rewiring that adds a ground wire to the new three slot grounded type receptacle. Grounded type (three slot) receptacles may not be substituted for un-grounded (two slot) receptacles unless a ground wire is connected. Only one exception to this rule is allowed by the National Electric Code (NEC), and that is when the receptacle is protected by a ground fault circuit interrupter (GFI or GFCI).

So what do you do? Well the simplest answer is to only replace 2 slot receptacles with 2 slot receptacles. 2 slot receptacles are still readily available, and although not every hardware store stocks them, they can certainly order them for you.

There are only two options available and allowed by the NEC for replacing 2 slot receptacles with 3 slot receptacles. **Option one** uses a GFCI breaker in place of the regular circuit breaker in the main electrical panel and the receptacles **must be labeled as GFCI Protected and Un-Grounded**, while **Option two** replaces the standard electrical receptacles with special GFCI protected receptacles and **must be labeled as Un-Grounded**.

Facts

- Un-Grounded two slot receptacles are allowed in older construction, but Un-Grounded 3 slot receptacles must have GFCI protection and be labeled as described above.
- Un-Grounded GFCI protected receptacles **are safer** than Un-Grounded two slot receptacles.
- Un-Grounded GFCI protected receptacles **are safer** than modern grounded three slot receptacles that have no GFCI protection.
- Modern Grounded 3 slot receptacles with GFCI protection provide the best combination of personal safety and equipment safety.