

Special power outlets called *ground-fault interrupters* (GFIs) are now being used in kitchens, bathrooms, basements, exterior outlets, and other hazardous areas of new homes. These devices are designed to protect persons from electric shock by sensing small currents (≈ 5 mA) leaking to ground. (The principle of their operation is described in Chapter 31.) When an excessive leakage current is detected, the current is shut off in less than 1 ms.

Quick Quiz 28.4

Is a circuit breaker wired in series or in parallel with the device it is protecting?

SUMMARY

The **emf** of a battery is equal to the voltage across its terminals when the current is zero. That is, the emf is equivalent to the **open-circuit voltage** of the battery.

The **equivalent resistance** of a set of resistors connected in **series** is

$$R_{\text{eq}} = R_1 + R_2 + R_3 + \cdots \quad (28.6)$$

The **equivalent resistance** of a set of resistors connected in **parallel** is

$$\frac{1}{R_{\text{eq}}} = \frac{1}{R_1} + \frac{1}{R_2} + \frac{1}{R_3} + \cdots \quad (28.8)$$

If it is possible to combine resistors into series or parallel equivalents, the preceding two equations make it easy to determine how the resistors influence the rest of the circuit.

Circuits involving more than one loop are conveniently analyzed with the use of **Kirchhoff's rules**:

1. The sum of the currents entering any junction in an electric circuit must equal the sum of the currents leaving that junction:

$$\sum I_{\text{in}} = \sum I_{\text{out}} \quad (28.9)$$

2. The sum of the potential differences across all elements around any circuit loop must be zero:

$$\sum_{\text{closed loop}} \Delta V = 0 \quad (28.10)$$

The first rule is a statement of conservation of charge; the second is equivalent to a statement of conservation of energy.

When a resistor is traversed in the direction of the current, the change in potential ΔV across the resistor is $-IR$. When a resistor is traversed in the direction opposite the current, $\Delta V = +IR$. When a source of emf is traversed in the direction of the emf (negative terminal to positive terminal), the change in potential is $+\mathcal{E}$. When a source of emf is traversed opposite the emf (positive to negative), the change in potential is $-\mathcal{E}$. The use of these rules together with Equations 28.9 and 28.10 allows you to analyze electric circuits.

If a capacitor is charged with a battery through a resistor of resistance R , the charge on the capacitor and the current in the circuit vary in time according to