

Adding circuit slots to the distribution box

Article Overview

You can add circuit slots to a distribution box by using tandem breakers or installing a subpanel, ensuring compatibility and adherence to electrical codes.

Options for Expanding a Full Distribution Box

1. **Tandem (Half-Size) Breakers** Tandem breakers, also called twin or half-size breakers, allow two independent 120-volt circuits to occupy a single slot in the panel. Each side operates independently, providing the same overcurrent protection as a standard breaker. This effectively doubles the number of circuits in a panel without physically enlarging it. Before installing, verify that your panel is rated to accept tandem breakers, as using them in an incompatible panel can compromise safety and violate electrical codes .

2. **Installing a Subpanel** If tandem breakers are insufficient or the main panel cannot accept them, a subpanel is a safe alternative. A subpanel is a smaller auxiliary breaker box powered by a single double-pole breaker from the main panel. It provides additional slots for new circuits while consuming only one or two slots in the main panel. A four-wire feeder cable (two hot wires, one neutral, and one ground) must connect the main panel to the subpanel, and the neutral and ground bus bars in the subpanel must remain isolated .

Planning and Safety Considerations

- **Load Assessment:** Calculate the total electrical load to ensure the main panel and any new circuits do not exceed the rated capacity ...

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Can you add new circuits to your existing breaker box safely?

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