

Electrical distribution box in the house

Article Overview

A home's electrical distribution box, also called a breaker box or panel, safely distributes electricity to all circuits and protects against overloads.

Purpose and Function

The distribution box serves as the central hub of a home's electrical system, receiving power from the main supply and dividing it into individual circuits for lights, outlets, and appliances. Each circuit is protected by a circuit breaker or fuse, which automatically disconnects power in case of overloads or short circuits, preventing damage and reducing fire risk. Modern panels may also include residual-current devices (RCDs) or RCBOs for additional safety and monitoring of electrical faults .

Location

In most homes, the distribution box is located in accessible areas such as the basement, garage, utility room, or mounted outside near the electrical meter. It is typically a rectangular metal box, about the size of a medicine cabinet, positioned close to where power lines enter the house .

Components

A typical residential distribution box contains:

- Main switch or breaker: Controls the entire electrical supply and allows complete disconnection during emergencies or maintenance.
- Circuit breakers (MCBs): Protect individual circuits from overcurrent.
- Residual-current devices (RCDs) or RCBOs: Provide protection against earth faults and leakage currents.
- Busbars: Conduct electricity from the main supply to individual breakers.
- Neutral and earth bars: Secure neutral and grounding wires.
- Enclosure: Provides physical protection and may have an IP rating for dust and moisture resistance .

Safety and Maintenance

Accessing the distribution box is essential for:

- Power restoration: Resetting tripped breakers or replacing blown fuses....



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