



FEDERAL PACIFIC STAB-LOK BREAKERS

Federal Pacific Stab-Lok breakers are typically found in homes built from the 1960's through the 1980's. Although there are conflicting information, Federal Pacific Stab-Lok breaker panels are potentially a fire hazard. It is estimated that tens of thousands of homes still have these panels in service.

How to Identify the FPE Stab-Lok Panel

Look for 2 key items: First, "Federal Pacific Stab-Lok" will be on a sticker either inside or outside of the front cover panel door. Second, most of the Stab-Lok breakers are labeled in bright orange or red.

Exposure

Federal Pacific Stab-Lok breakers are potentially a fire hazard. The double-pole breakers fail to trip a high percentage of the time when overloaded or in a short circuit situation and have also in some instances come loose on the buss bar. Because of that exposure the breakers may fail to protect the wires and can overheat, arc, and lead to a fire. From 1980 to 1983, The Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) conducted laboratory tests on the double-pole FPE breakers and stated the double-pole breakers would fail 25% of the time under modest load. The failed breaker may not function properly under any further overload condition. Federal Pacific never refuted CPSC's findings and acknowledged the problem with the double-pole breakers failing to trip.



Regardless of the opinions, the FPE panels should be inspected by a qualified electrician, the breakers should be removed from the panel box and conduct an inspection of the contacts with the buss bar. The contacts should be inspected to insure they are clean, and show no signs of overheating or arcing. However, if the breakers trip off more than occasionally, or there are burnt marks or loose connections between the contacts, this should be more thoroughly investigated and replaced by a qualified electrical contractor. The best advice is to be aware of your electrical system, never overload any electrical circuit, and if there is flickering, overheating, or sparking from any device – contact a qualified electrician.

Mackoul Risk Solutions recommends the replacement of the entire FPE panel – all Stab-Lok breakers and load center.

The CPSC advises consumers to take certain safety precautions with all circuit breakers and fuses. Consumers should:

- Know your electrical circuit. Know which outlets and products are connected to each circuit.
- Never overload any electrical circuit by connecting too many products to the circuit. Be particularly careful not to connect several products that demand high current (such as heating appliances) to a low amperage circuit.
- Comply with local building codes in wiring or adding electrical circuits. Make sure the wiring and devices used in the circuit are connected to a circuit breaker or fuse of the proper size.
- Immediately disconnect any electrical product if problems develop. Have the product examined by a competent repair person.
- Investigate to determine why a fuse blows or circuit breaker trips. Do not simply replace the fuse or reset the breaker. If a fuse blows or breaker trips, it is often a warning that the circuit is overloaded. Check the circuit for causes of overloading (for example, too many appliances plugged in, a malfunctioning product, a short circuit). When in doubt, consult a licensed electrician.

As always, please contact us with any questions.