

FEDERAL PACIFIC STAB-LOK CIRCUIT BREAKERS

Federal Pacific Stab-Lok circuit breaker panels are potential fire hazards. These double-pole breakers fail to trip a high percentage of the time when overloaded or in a short-circuit situation. They 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 Stab-Lok breakers and stated that they failed 25% of the time under modest load. The failed breakers may not function properly under any further overload conditions. Federal Pacific never refuted CPSC's findings and acknowledged the problem with the double-pole breakers failing to trip.

Stab-Lok panels should be inspected by a qualified electrician, the breakers should be removed from the panel box, and the contacts with the buss bar should be inspected. The contacts should be inspected to ensure 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, they 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 contact a qualified electrician if there is flickering, overheating, or sparking from any device.

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



To identify Federal Pacific Stab-Lok panels, look for two 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.

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

- *Know which outlets and products are connected to each electrical circuit.*
- *Never overload any electrical circuit.*
- *Do not 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.*
- *If a fuse blows or circuit breaker trips, determine why. Do not simply replace the fuse or reset the breaker. Check the circuit for causes of overloading (for example, too many appliances plugged in, a malfunctioning product, or a short circuit). When in doubt, consult a licensed electrician.*