

Distribution box mounted above the door

Article Overview

Installing a distribution box directly above a door is not recommended and is generally against standard electrical codes due to accessibility and safety concerns.

Recommended Height and Accessibility

Distribution boxes, also known as consumer units or electrical panels, should be installed at a height that allows easy access for operation, inspection, and maintenance. The typical recommended height for wall-mounted boxes is approximately 4.5 to 5.5 feet (1.4 to 1.7 meters) from the floor, which ensures that most adults can reach the controls comfortably without stretching or using a ladder . For new builds in England and Wales, guidance suggests mounting the main switch between 1350mm and 1450mm above the finished floor to balance accessibility and safety .

Code and Safety Considerations

According to the National Electrical Code (NEC), electrical panels must be installed in readily accessible areas with sufficient clearance: at least 30 inches wide and 36 inches deep in front of the panel, and the top of the panel should not exceed 6 feet 7 inches (2 meters) above the floor . Panels cannot be installed in locations that obstruct access, such as above doors, inside closets, or behind shelving, because these positions prevent safe operation and maintenance . Installing a panel above a door could also interfere with the door's swing and violate the required workspace clearance.

Practical Implications

Placing a distribution box above a door can create several issues:

- o Difficult access for resetting breakers or performing maintenance
 - o Increased risk of accidents due to awkward reaching or use of ladders
 - o Non-compliance with NEC, BS 7671, or local building codes
 - o Potential obstruction of the door and surrounding workspace
- For safe and compliant installation, the box should be mounted on a wall in a dry, accessible area, away from high-traffic zones, water sources, or obstacles . If space constraints exist, consult a licensed electrician to identify an alternative location that meets code requirements.

Conclusion

A distribution box should not be installed above a door. Proper installation requires a height that is easily reachable, with adequate clearance for safe operation and maintenance, in accordance with NEC and local

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building codes .

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