



Is It Time to Upgrade Your Electrical Panel?

Your electrical panel is the most critical element of the electrical system in your home. It may be time to replace your electrical panel if the electrical needs of your home have surpassed its capabilities or if you are having common electrical issues. Outdated electrical panels are a common cause of electrical fires in homes so it is important for the safety of your family to identify if your home's electrical panel is due for an upgrade.

Common signs that your electrical panel may need to be replaced:

Frequently Tripping Breakers

Your circuit breakers are designed to trip when they are overloaded or there is an electrical fault. This process helps to stop the flow of electricity that can overheat and damage your wiring, panel, and your home. A new electrical panel can help keep up with your energy demands.

Breakers Will Not Stay Reset

If your breaker trips, typically you just reset, and power is restored. However, if any of your breakers will not stay reset, it could be a sign that there is a larger problem in your electrical system. Breakers that will not reset at all or stay reset should be investigated by a professional electrician.

You Have an Old System with Fuses

If you own an older home, there is high likelihood that your electrical panel uses a fuse system instead of a more modern circuit breaker system. These systems are outdated and can cause safety risks. Most panels that use fuses are not designed to handle the needs of all the electrical components we use today in our homes.

Should I have my electrical panel inspected?

If you are reading this article, it probably means it is time to give your electrical system a checkup. If your electrical panel is more than 25 years old, you should have it inspected asap.

Obvious signs it is likely time to install or upgrade a new electrical panel

- Crackling sounds from the panel
- Corrosion, burn marks and/or rust on the circuit breakers
- Appliances are running at less than full power
- Outlets near water are no GFCIs
- The interior of the electrical panel is warm
- Any burn smells around the panel
- Major home improvement projects.
- Adding new electrical appliances that have a high electrical consumption
- If more people are going to be living in your home or building

The following panels need to be replaced immediately:

Some older electrical panels are faulty and need to be replaced with newer panels with safety upgrades. Any electrical panels that do not meet with the electricity needs of your home or do not meet the National Electric Code safety protection standards should be updated or replaced.

- Federal Pacific Electric (FPE) Electrical Panel are considered dangerous by insurance companies and Consumer Product Safety Commission. These panels, installed in homes between 1950 and 1980, have design and manufacturing defects that can cause fires and electric shocks. The breakers have been shown not to trip, causing the panels to catch fire.
- Zinsco Electrical Panel. Zinsco panels were taken off the market in the mid-1970s. They had a defective design that allows power to flow even when the breakers are switched off. The breakers can then melt and fuse to the bus bar causing them to fail. The breakers can also have a poor connection to the bus bar causing arcing to occur.
- While the Pushmatic Electrical Panels have not been recalled, they are still considered dangerous. Pushmatic panels have breaker switches that deteriorate over time. These panels also do not have a main breaker switch to turn off all power. They are also likely accompanied by aluminum or ungrounded wiring.
- Other common outdated panels than can be considered dangerous are Challenger, Murray, older Westinghouse, Wadsworth and a variety of others. It is best to contact a Des Moines Electrician to inspect your electrical panel.
- Fuse Boxes. Homes today require up to 200 amps of power or more. Fuse boxes can only handle 30-60 amps. Many types of fuses are no longer available for because they present a risk of fire and electrocution.

Overwhelmed or Concerned About Your Safety? Contact an Electrician in Des Moines for Help!