

RIVO MULTITRADE OPTICAL SYSTEMS

Electrical distribution box installed under the stairs



Overview

Panelboard on Stairs, Wireway Clearance and More Section 240.24 (F) prohibits overcurrent protective devices from being installed/located over the steps of.

Key Takeaways

Placing an electrical distribution box at the bottom of stairs is generally not recommended unless strict NEC clearance and safety requirements are met. Code and Safety Considerations

The National Electrical Code (NEC) sets specific rules for panel placement near stairs. Overcurrent devices, such as circuit breakers, cannot be installed over the steps of a stairway (NEC 240.24(F)) to prevent hazards from limited working space and accidental contact. A panel may be installed on a stair landing if it does not obstruct the steps and the required working space is maintained. The NEC also requires a clear working space in front of the panel: at least 2 feet 6 inches wide, 3 feet deep, and 6 feet 6 inches high to allow safe access for servicing. This space must be free of obstructions, including appliances or stored items, and the panel door must be able to open to 90 degrees. Panels should not be located in closets containing ignitable materials, such as clothes, or in bathrooms.

Practical Considerations

- Headroom and accessibility: Under-stair areas often have limited height, which may make it difficult to meet the 6'-6" clearance requirement.

- Fire safety: Any wall penetrations for wiring must be properly fire-stopped to prevent the spread of fire or smoke .
- Alternative locations: If the under-stair space cannot meet clearance or safety requirements, consider placing the panel on a nearby wall in a hallway or utility area where full access is possible .

Summary

While it is technically possible to install a distribution box at the bottom of stairs, it must not be over the steps, must provide adequate working clearance, and must avoid ignitable materials. Many under-stair spaces fail to meet these requirements, so careful measurement and planning are essential. Consulting a licensed electrician is recommended to ensure NEC compliance and safety.

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This document is for preliminary research. Verify specifications against current standards, product documentation and project requirements.

