



HOMEOWNER SAFETY GUIDE

Why FPE, Zinsco & Sylvania-Zinsco Panels Are Replaced

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THE BOTTOM LINE

When an inspection confirms FPE Stab-Lok or a Zinsco/Sylvania-Zinsco design, full panel replacement is generally recommended instead of relying on individual breaker swaps.

What is the concern?

1

Federal Pacific Electric (FPE) Stab-Lok

CONCERN: BREAKER TRIP RELIABILITY

CPSC testing confirmed that certain FPE breakers failed UL calibration requirements. CPSC closed its investigation without a final hazard determination or blanket recall.

2

Zinsco

CONCERN: BREAKER-TO-BUS ARCING AND OVERHEATING

U.S. Fire Administration training material describes poor contact at the breaker and bus connection, which can arc, build resistance, create heat, and damage hidden panel components.

3

Sylvania-Zinsco / GTE Sylvania

CONCERN: SOME MODELS USE THE ZINSCO DESIGN

Not every Sylvania panel is the same. Replacement concern applies to Sylvania-Zinsco and certain GTE Sylvania equipment using the Zinsco-style breaker and bus design. Identification comes first.

Why replace the complete panel?

Hidden failures

A panel can still supply power while a breaker or bus connection has deteriorated.

Obsolete equipment

Original product lines are decades out of production, limiting support and compatible parts.

Bus damage remains

Replacing one breaker does not repair heat-damaged bus material or the original connection design.

Verified modern system

Replacement creates a clear, permitted starting point for capacity, grounding, labeling, and protection.

Safe first step

Photograph the closed cover, visible manufacturer label, and breaker handles. Do not remove the dead front or touch internal parts.

Call promptly for warning signs

Burning odor, buzzing, crackling, unusual heat, flickering tied to panel loads, scorching, smoke, or active arcing. Call 911 for smoke or fire.

PRIMARY REFERENCES

CPSC: FPE investigation and safety notice

U.S. Fire Administration: Fire Investigation - Electrical Systems

UL Solutions: Panelboard application guide

UL Solutions: Circuit breaker marking and compatibility guide

SEND US A PHOTO OF THE CLOSED PANEL AND LABEL

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