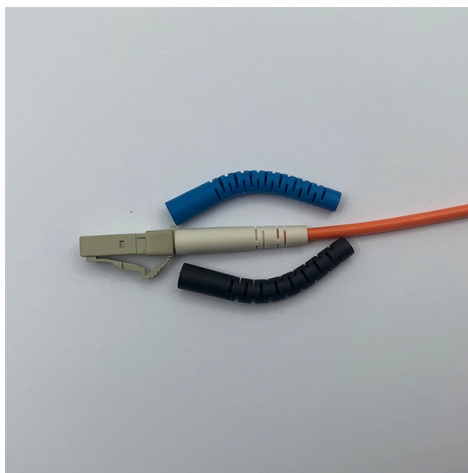


What should be used to cover the distribution box



Overview

The appropriate covering method depends entirely on whether the box is active and required for future use or if it has been completely abandoned.

Key Takeaways

A distribution box should be covered with a proper, code-compliant enclosure made of durable materials like polycarbonate, ASA, or epoxy-coated steel, ensuring safety, accessibility, and protection from environmental hazards.

Safety and Code Compliance

The cover of a distribution box must prevent accidental contact with live wires, protect against dust, moisture, and physical damage, and comply with electrical codes such as the NEC. For active boxes, the cover must remain easily removable to allow immediate access for maintenance or emergencies. Outdoor boxes require weatherproof covers with appropriate IP or NEMA ratings to prevent water ingress and corrosion.

Material Selection

Common materials for distribution box covers include: Engineering thermoplastics like Polycarbonate (PC) or Acrylonitrile Styrene Acrylate (ASA), which are lightweight, durable, and resistant to impact. Epoxy-coated or powder-coated stainless steel, offering high strength and corrosion resistance, suitable for industrial or outdoor environments.

Types of Covers

Blank covers: Used for inactive or abandoned boxes to seal the enclosure safely.

Switch or outlet covers: For boxes containing switches or outlets, available in plastic or metal. Weatherproof covers: For outdoor installations, providing protection against rain, snow, and UV exposure.

Decorative or hinged covers: For indoor areas, lightweight panels, hinged artwork, or sliding panels can conceal the box while maintaining required clearance for safety.

Installation Considerations

Ensure the box is properly grounded and wires are neatly arranged inside before covering. Maintain the required working space in front of the box (typically 36 inches deep and 30 inches wide) for safe access. Use screws or fasteners appropriate for the cover material, avoiding overtightening.

For abandoned boxes, if local codes allow, the box can be permanently sealed with drywall or repurposed as a decorative niche, provided all wiring is removed. By selecting the correct cover type and material, and following safety and code requirements, a distribution box can be safely protected while maintaining accessibility and aesthetic integration into the space.

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