

Does Panel Location Matter?

Q. In a new house I am building, I would like to locate the electrical service panel under a counter. This would put the top of the panel at a height of about 34 inches. Is there a reason this shouldn't be done?

A. Master electrician Rex Cauldwell responds: There are more reasons not to do this than I can cover in this limited

space. First of all, you cannot put the panel under anything. You cannot put it over anything. You cannot put it next to anything. There must be a clear space in front of the panel for an electrician to stand. The space must be kept clear for at least 3 feet in front of the panel, and for 30 inches left to right in front of the panel. There must

be at least 6 feet 7 inches of headroom, measured from the floor to the ceiling. The main breaker can be no higher than 6 feet 7 inches above the floor.

In your case, locating the panel under a counter would require an electrician to work on his or her knees when working in the panel. For this reason alone, the inspector would probably fail you.

Required Clear Space Around Panel

