

Are you aware of the benefits?



What is a Classified circuit breaker?

A Classified circuit breaker has been evaluated by Underwriters Laboratories, Inc. (UL) and found to be suitable for use in place of Listed circuit breakers in specific Listed panel boards. A Classified circuit breaker would be labeled and marked as UL Classified, to be directly substituted for other brands that are considered Listed.

What are the facts about Classified circuit breakers?

The UL Classified mark appears on products that UL has evaluated. Products carrying this mark have been evaluated for specific properties, a limited range of hazards, and/or suitability for use under limited or special conditions.

Originally, the manufacturers that built load centers also built the corresponding circuit breakers; this is no longer the case. There are many load center manufacturers and there are many circuit breaker manufacturers.

UL Classified circuit breakers are manufactured by a company other than the original load center manufacturer and UL Listed breakers are manufactured by the original load center manufacturer. Both Classified and Listed breakers are evaluated by UL with the same performance tests and accreditation standards.

Are Classified circuit breakers addressed in the National Electrical Code (NEC®) Handbook?

Article 100-Definitions: Labeled: "Listing" or "labeling" by a qualified testing laboratory will provide a basis for approval. See Section 90-7. Circuit breakers "labeled" Classified have been investigated and found suitable for use in place of other Listed circuit breakers in specific Listed panel boards and are acceptable.

The basic standard used to investigate products in this category is UL 489, Molded-Case Circuit Breakers and UL 50, Enclosures for Electrical Equipment. Any "listing" or "labeling" by a qualified testing laboratory will provide a basis for approval.

CLASSIFIED CIRCUIT BREAKERS:

What are the myths about Classified circuit breakers?

Myth #1: Increased safety risk. There seems to be an implication that a Classified breaker is not as good [credible] as a Listed breaker. With historical perspective, a term was created to distinguish between what is manufactured since inception (Listed) and what is subsequently manufactured as a replacement (Classified). Because there is no difference in the performance in testing services nor in the accreditation standards used between the two, there is no safety risk.

Myth #2: Use of a Classified circuit breaker will void the load center warranty. All load center manufacturers hold a warranty of a specified time frame, as do all circuit breaker manufacturers. When a Classified breaker is used as an addition or replacement, the consumer has the right to engage either warranty. All load centers and Classified breakers are warranted to be free from failures, due to defects in material or workmanship under proper care and normal usage, in residential installation.

Is there a difference between Classified breakers and Interchangeable breakers?

Yes, there is a difference. Interchangeable simply means that a style of breaker, regardless of brand, may "fit" into different brands of load centers. However, there are many Classified breakers being manufactured today that are also considered Interchangeable and regarded as suitable replacements for Listed breakers.

What are the benefits of using Classified circuit breakers?

Lower cost. Original manufactured replacement costs are always at a premium due to the notion that consumers are part of a captive audience. Not necessarily so when it comes to adding a simple wiring circuit and/or replacing a worn out circuit breaker.

Assurance. The threat of losing the load center's warranty does not justify paying an excessive amount of money for a Listed

circuit breaker over a Classified circuit breaker. Also, the Classified circuit breaker manufacturer usually picks up the load center warranty due to the Magnuson-Moss Warranty Act. UL would not allow an unsafe product to be used in a Listed enclosure.

Safety. The electrical industry has recognized the need for quality replacement parts without risking consumer safety. Underwriters Laboratories, Inc. is an organization that prides itself on its testing, certification and the quality of the products it Lists and/or Classifies. The suggestion that a Classified product is not as good as a Listed product is not true. UL has labeled products as Classified to be directly substituted for other brands that are considered Listed.

Original panel board warranty

Original panel board manufacturers may claim that use of unspecified breakers voids the warranty. The Magnuson-Moss Warranty Act prevents manufacturers from making warranties contingent upon the use of replacement parts, as long as the third party part is safe. Since the safety has been proven by UL, the load center manufacturer's warranty is still in effect. To review the Magnuson-Moss Warranty Act, go to www.mlmlaw.com.

Understanding Classified breaker terminology

Specified circuit breaker—Each manufacturer lists the brands of breakers that can be used in their panel boards. Manufacturers will not list competitors as "Specified" because they have not been tested in their load centers, even though they are suitable replacements. Classified circuit breaker manufacturers have tested the breakers in all specified load centers.

UL Classified circuit breaker—A breaker that is considered suitable, by Underwriters Laboratory, for use in the place of the specified circuit breaker.

Listed circuit breaker—According to the NEC®, the Listing of a product is by an independent third party.

Labeled circuit breaker—A breaker with a label affixed by an independent third party.

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UL's Classification program is accredited by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) and accepted by all the regulatory jurisdictions that require special recognition. Underwriters Laboratories, Inc. (UL) is an independent, not-for-profit product safety testing, certification and quality system registration organization that has evaluated products, materials and systems in the interest of public safety for more than a century. More than 14 billion products bearing the UL mark enter the marketplace every year. UL, its affiliates, subsidiaries and branch offices are capable of providing manufacturers with product certification and system registrations for all of North America through UL's five full-service testing, conformity assessment and trade facilitation centers in the United States.

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