

Notice

To: Woodgate Homeowners
From: Woodgate Board of Directors
Date: April 30, 2025
Re: FPE Electrical Panels

It has been brought to our attention that Woodgate Glen's original electrical panels are manufactured by Federal Pacific (FPE). FPE panels have been known to have problems such as breakers over-heating or not properly tripping and they are no longer sold. Electrical panels lifespans are generally from 25-40 years. If your unit still has its original panel, the Board strongly recommends you have your panel evaluated by a qualified licensed electrical contractor to ensure safe operation. Pursuant to Woodgate Glen HOA's (WGHOA) governing documents, electrical panels are the responsibility of the homeowner.

This matter initially came to the Board's attention during our most recent insurance renewal, when the Board learned that many insurance companies will no longer insure properties with certain brands of electrical panels. WGHOA's insurance carrier still insures properties with FPE panels. It is possible that WGHOA's insurance company may at a future date require Woodgate Glen to update its panels in order to maintain insurance coverage. This would necessitate an immediate replacement by homeowners or a special assessment imposed by the WGHOA against each owner who has failed to replace their panel for WGHOA to replace the panel in order to maintain insurance coverage. The process of an individual special assessment would more than likely entail legal representation of WGHOA, adding additional costs to the special assessment for the homeowner.

Updating electrical panels at Woodgate Glen is challenging because PG&E codes and state/local building codes have changed over the years. Electrical panels are now required to be installed 15 feet from gas meters. That's not practical at Woodgate Glen, since all of its meters and panels are directly adjacent to each other and there are few or no other spaces under an overhang to install a panel. It's also much more costly to move a panel than to replace it where it is.

One of our Board members consulted with three local electrical contractors regarding this issue. All three were familiar with working with PG&E and the City of Santa Rosa to obtain an exemption to the code due to architectural constraints. A test installation was successfully completed at Woodgate in April, replacing a like for like panel (new brand) in the original location. The cost was \$2900, though this was a discounted rate for potential group replacements. The other estimates received for group rates were between \$5000-\$6000.

The Board considers this a good opportunity for homeowners to avoid potential safety and insurance problems in the future. Homeowners may contact the contractor used in our test case (Reyff Electric, Inc.) or may make their own arrangements with a licensed contractor to evaluate, update or upgrade their electrical panels. Please note, this is not a recommendation or endorsement of Reyff Electric's services but rather is being provided for homeowners' convenience. Homeowners are responsible for their own research and due diligence regarding the competency or selection of any vendors they choose to use. Any changes to an electrical panel require Architectural Committee Request approval by the HOA. Repainting of any siding/trim is the homeowner's responsibility.