

Our Power Supplies Are Efficient

Even Without the ENERGY STAR Logo

By Dave Pincek



The pro AV industry thrives on standards. In the last couple of years, standards related to energy efficiency have begun to emerge, but they haven't yet crystallized into a cohesive set. There's so much shifting going on, it's understandable that some have found it challenging to keep up with the changes. Take the EPA's ENERGY STAR standard, for instance. It's been well established on consumer products for years, but didn't cover pro AV products until the recent release of ENERGY STAR 2.0. Then at the end of last year, one type of product that was previously covered by ENERGY STAR ceased to be part of the program. This is a small sample which shows that energy efficiency certifications are still in a state of flux.

Where's the ENERGY STAR Logo?

This flux hasn't reduced the efficiency of our external power supplies, but it has had an impact on how they are labeled. If you examine an Extron PS Series external power supply manufactured after December 31, 2010 you will notice that the ENERGY STAR logo is gone and a new Level V logo has appeared on the label. So, what's up with that? What happened is that the EPA recently decided to phase out the ENERGY STAR program covering external power supplies. There are several reasons for the decision, but chief among them was the fact that other federal minimum efficiency standards for external power supplies already meet or exceed current ENERGY STAR standards.

How to Determine Efficiency

So, with the ENERGY STAR logo no longer appearing on an external power supply, how can you be sure that it's energy efficient? There are standards of efficiency for power supplies created by the California Energy Commission that have been adopted by the Environmental Protection Agency – the EPA. Five levels were created. Level V, currently the most efficient level, was used by ENERGY STAR for their final testing, and is the rating that is carried by all external supplies currently manufactured and supplied by Extron.

Level V requires the supply to be tested at both 115 VAC and 230 VAC line voltages, and with specific loads ranging from 0% with no output or product load to maximum output. At 0% output or no load, the power supply must consume less than 0.3W. That rating is intended for all those cell phone and PDA chargers plugged in at home with no device connected. Power efficiency is measured at 25%, 50%, 75%, and 100%

loads, and the resulting efficiency factors are averaged. To earn a Level V rating, the average efficiency for an Extron external power supply with an output power rating of 12 watts must be 77% or greater. For 36 watt supplies, it must be 86% or greater.

This rating system is now part of the international energy efficiency marking protocol being implemented worldwide. It provides a system for external power supply manufacturers to designate a minimum efficiency so that customers can quickly and easily determine the efficiency of an external power supply.

We will continue to manufacture and design our external power supplies to meet or exceed the international Level V standard. You may still receive external power supplies from Extron with the ENERGY STAR logo, but those products were manufactured before December 31st, 2010.

Our Commitment to Energy Efficiency

Extron is more committed than ever to helping consultants and integrators deliver energy efficient solutions. That's why we'll continue to work diligently with standards organizations to develop and adopt standards that everyone can rely on; while still maintaining our focus on designing and manufacturing products for maximum performance, reliability and efficiency.



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