

Frequently Asked Questions

Final Rule Pertaining to Test Procedures for Fluorescent Lamp Ballasts

1. What is the purpose of this notice?

In this Final Rule, the U.S. Department of Energy (“DOE”) adopts an amended test procedure for fluorescent lamp ballasts (“FLBs”). DOE has determined that the amended test procedure is not unduly burdensome to conduct and is reasonably designed to produce test results for FLBs that reflect energy efficiency, energy use, and estimated operating costs during a representative average use cycle or period of use.

This Final Rule was developed as part of DOE’s ongoing commitment to consider feedback from all interested stakeholders and promote an open and transparent rulemaking process.

2. What does this Final Rule do?

In this Final Rule, DOE amends the FLB test procedure by 1) updating references to industry standards; 2) clarifying the selection of reference lamps; 3) removing extraneous requirements in the stabilization procedure; 4) providing a second stabilization option for measuring ballast luminous efficiency; and 5) revising the test procedure for measuring standby mode energy consumption.

3. What is an FLB?

A fluorescent lamp ballast is a device used to start and operate fluorescent lamps. The ballast provides the initial voltage and current necessary to initiate a fluorescent discharge and then limits the electrical current to safely sustain the fluorescent light discharge during lamp operation.

4. How much energy do FLBs consume?

A typical fluorescent lamp ballast consumes about 240 kWh in the commercial and industrial sectors. In aggregate, fluorescent lamp ballasts currently consume approximately 2.1 quads/year of full-fuel-cycle energy in the United States, or about 4.7 percent of buildings’ energy use.

5. How many FLBs are shipped annually in the United States?

There were about 90 million fluorescent lamp ballasts shipped in 2015.

6. Who are the parties that may be interested in this notice?

Interested parties include manufacturers of FLBs, trade associations, distributors, energy utilities, state agencies, international organizations, and consumer, energy, and environmental advocacy groups.