

Whitepaper: DesignLights Consortium and Energy Star

If you're looking for energy efficient appliances, you look for the Energy Star mark; the same goes for lightbulbs for your home. But where do you turn to confirm a commercial lighting product is really energy efficient and performs as promised? The answer is: The DesignLights™ Consortium (DLC).

DLC is a collaboration of utility companies and regional energy efficiency organizations committed to raising awareness of the benefits of efficient lighting in commercial buildings.

Why can't these products just get the Energy Star label? Because there are no categories for most commercial Solid State Luminaires.

ENERGY STAR is a joint program of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) helping us all save money and protect the environment through energy efficient products and practices. It was founded in 1992 by the EPA as a voluntary labeling program designed to identify and promote energy-efficient products to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Initially covering Computers and other office equipment you can find the label today on anything from major appliances, office equipment, lighting and home electronics; all in all there are over 60 categories.¹

In 2008 the DOE created a program for solid state lighting and issued the first Manufacturer's Guide for Qualifying Solid-State Lighting Luminaires.² The program does have categories for both residential and non-residential applications, however the list is not all encompassing and neglects to include specialty lighting products.

That's why the DLC is working in cooperation with DOE's ENERGY STAR team to develop the Qualified Products List (QPL) and procedures. Today there are 19 categories to qualify specialty SSL luminaires through the DLC including Outdoor luminaires, Bollards, Parking Garage Luminaires, Linear Panels, High Bay and Low-bay and very recently Retrofit Kits for Outdoor luminaires and Four-foot linear replacement lamps.³ The Members expect the products from their QPL will eventually be incorporated into the ENERGY STAR list once corresponding categories are added.

And who are these Members? Utilities and energy-efficiency programs throughout the United States.⁴ As of today there are 33 members and a dozen or so more that are not official members but still regard the DLC as the key authority in validating lighting manufacturer's claims.

So why is it such a big deal to get your products on the QPL? Once a product is on the QPL it is basically pre-approved for any applicable rebate for any of the Members. These span from East to West and North to South and the list is growing. Rebates can be anything from 20cents per saved Watt to a flat \$ amount for each replaced fixture. This is a great incentive for potential customers to choose a product already pre-approved rather than going through the hassle of dealing with individual utilities or rebate programs on their own.

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¹ http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=about.ab_index

² http://www.energystar.gov/ia/partners/product_specs/program_reqs/SSL_prog_req_V1.1.pdf

³ <http://www.designlights.org/solidstate.manufacturer.requirements.php>

⁴ <http://www.designlights.org/solidstate.sponsors.php>