

Glossary

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A

AC/DC converter	Conventional switched-mode power supplies generate a DC voltage from an AC voltage. For this reason they are sometimes also called AC/DC converters. Such devices are increasingly compatible for use with DC input voltages. The primary and secondary sides are typically electrically isolated.
Ambient temperature (operational)	The ambient operating temperature (the min. and max. values) together with the output current and voltage ratings can be used to describe the power capabilities of a power supply unit.

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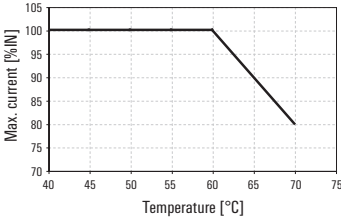
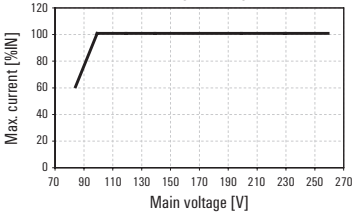
Burst	A burst is a quick low-power burst pulse which can, for example, simulate welding equipment phenomena. Similar phenomena can also result from switching operations on the mains supply. This test can be used to demonstrate immunity against quick transients.
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C

Class of protection	Electrical equipment is classified according to varying classes of protection. These classes define the particular safety measures that are required to avoid an electrical shock. The most widely used power supplies correspond with protection class I. The basic requirement of protection class I is for a basic insulation and for the earthing of all conductive housing parts. If the basic insulation fails, then the earthed conductive housing serves to prevent an electrical shock. For this reason, devices in protection class I are equipped with an earth (PE) connection.
Connecting power supply units in parallel	Power supplies can only be connected in parallel when this is clearly permitted by the manufacturer. Parallel connections are then normally tied to certain conditions. This is a typical way to increase the output power (for example, when extending a facility). Power supplies are also wired in parallel in order to design in redundant power supply systems. The parallel circuit is not wired straight though but connects using decoupling diodes. → Redundancy
Cooling	Cooling is used by components or devices to prevent them from overheating. A variety of cooling strategies are available – two of the most common are natural and forced-air cooling. Natural (convection-based) cooling takes advantage of the natural air currents. Manufacturers must then ensure that there is sufficient air flow by specifying the clearance gaps and mounting positions that are required above and below the ventilation openings. Forced-air cooling normally uses a fan to dissipate any heat that has been generated. When fans are used in a device, they have the effect of increasing the likelihood of device outages. For this reason, a power supply with natural cooling methods is generally preferred.

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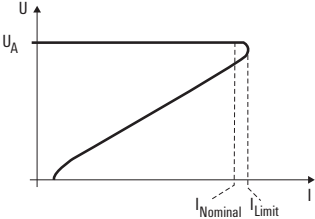
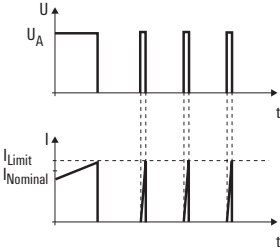
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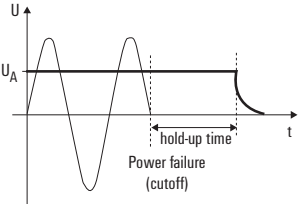
DC/DC converter	DC/DC converters are switched-mode power supplies that convert a specific DC voltage into another voltage. They are a variant of the AC/DC converter. DC/DC converters, in their simplest implementation, do not isolate voltage potentials. They are used only for adapting voltages. Improved DC/DC converters have isolated voltages. A safety isolating transformer in the power element ensures the required electrical isolation. Besides the voltage adaptation, the isolation of the voltage potentials is an important factor.																																		
Derating	For power supply devices, derating generally refers to the reduction in power as influenced by the surrounding temperature and the input voltage. A temperature derating often occurs starting at a surrounding temperature of 50 °C. The rated power is guaranteed up to this temperature. The available power continually declines as the temperature heats up above this level. This is typically specified in %/K. A voltage-dependent specification is another form of derating For switched-mode power supplies, the derating begins below a specific input voltage. So a switched-mode power supply with a wide input range can typically work under full power with 115 V AC input voltage. However at 85 V AC it can only produce 60 % of the power rating. The coefficient is usually specified in %/V. Temperature derating <table border="1"><caption>Temperature derating data</caption><thead><tr><th>Temperature [°C]</th><th>Max. current [%IN]</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>40</td><td>100</td></tr><tr><td>50</td><td>100</td></tr><tr><td>60</td><td>100</td></tr><tr><td>70</td><td>80</td></tr><tr><td>75</td><td>75</td></tr></tbody></table> Voltage derating <table border="1"><caption>Voltage derating data</caption><thead><tr><th>Main voltage [V]</th><th>Max. current [%IN]</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>85</td><td>60</td></tr><tr><td>115</td><td>100</td></tr><tr><td>130</td><td>100</td></tr><tr><td>150</td><td>100</td></tr><tr><td>170</td><td>100</td></tr><tr><td>190</td><td>100</td></tr><tr><td>210</td><td>100</td></tr><tr><td>230</td><td>100</td></tr><tr><td>250</td><td>100</td></tr><tr><td>270</td><td>100</td></tr></tbody></table>	Temperature [°C]	Max. current [%IN]	40	100	50	100	60	100	70	80	75	75	Main voltage [V]	Max. current [%IN]	85	60	115	100	130	100	150	100	170	100	190	100	210	100	230	100	250	100	270	100
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Diode modules	Diode modules are used to construct a redundant power supply system. They are important for decoupling the power supply unit. Thus, a short circuit that occurs on the output of a power supply unit will not influence the output voltage.																																		

E

Efficiency	The degree of efficiency is equal to the ratio of output power to input power and is expressed in percent. The degree of efficiency can be between 70 and 90 %, depending on the dimensions and type of technology in use.
EMC (electromagnetic compatibility)	Electromagnetic compatibility describes the interference emissions caused by an electronic device and the level of immunity against external electrical influences. Interference emissions can be caused by cabling and wires or by radiated emissions. Immunity measures the resistance against such wire-based emissions and against radiated emissions such as electrostatic fields and magnetic fields. Electric devices must also be protected against electrostatic discharges.

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F	
Foldback characteristic curve	The foldback characteristic curve is a special type of output curve that protects the power supply unit from overloads. When a specific current limit is exceeded (for example, by 110 or 120 % of the nominal level), the current is limited electronically and lowered to a very low, safe value. This downward-sloping characteristic curve means that it is not sufficient to simply eliminate the overload. The load must be reduced significantly more so that the adjustment control can return to the normal voltage control. Thus this solution is not suitable for many applications and is becoming less popular. 
G	
Galvanic isolation	Galvanic (electrical) isolation ensures that no electrical connections can exist between the primary and the secondary sides. Opto modules and transformers are the typical components used.
H	
Hiccup mode	The hiccup mode is a special output characteristic curve that protects power supply units from overloads and short circuits. The unit switches off at a specified current limit (for example, 110 or 120 % on the nominal rating) and then switches back on after a certain delay. This leads to a pulsating mode of operations which can only revert to continual operations after the overload has been eliminated. The main disadvantage here is that the connected consumer load must be restarted after every pause. A restart may not be possible with motors or large capacitive loads since the restart current peak may once again exceed the defined limit. 

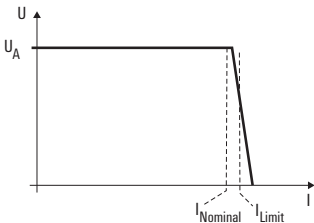
Hold-up time (mains-failure bridging time)	The hold-up time (also known as the mains-failure bridging time) is the interval from the start of the mains outage to the point in time when the output voltage can no longer be maintained at its original level. The hold-up time indicates how long a mains outage may last before it influences the output voltage. For DC power supplies, EN 6 1204 requires a bridging time of at least 20 ms. 
Input voltage range	This refers to the minimum and maximum input voltage at which the rated output specifications can be maintained.
Inrush current	The inrush current refers to the peak current that occurs when turning on a consumer load. Switched-mode power supplies have storage capacitors in the input which can cause significant current peaks while the mains power is being switched on. A variety of circuitry solutions can be used to attenuate these current peaks. In the simplest solution, an inrush limiter is used. Active switching can be used in other cases. The peak current specification indicates which upstream fuse should be used in the circuit. If a fuse is selected which is too sensitive, it can trigger when the mains power is switched on.

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Glossary/Technical appendix

IU characteristic curve

The IU characteristic curve is a special output characteristic curve that protects power supply units from overloads and short circuits. It offers the best performance with regards to overload and short circuit capabilities. A current limit is activated at a specific current level (for example, 110 or 120 % on the nominal rating). As the load continues to increase, the output voltage is reduced according to the current limit curve until it reaches a level approaching zero volts. Thus a pulsating mode of operations is avoided for short-term overloads. Large capacitive loads or motors are brought back up along the slope of the current-limit characteristic curve. After a short circuit or overload is fixed, the IU characteristic curve offers the advantage of immediately returning to the normal voltage control mechanism. The full output voltage is then immediately available. The IU characteristic curve is becoming the established standard for modern power supplies. Additional variants are available which pertain to the peak current capacity and the slope of the current-limit characteristic curve.



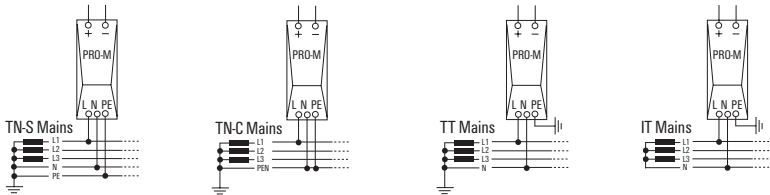
M

Mains harmonics

Power supplies can experience harmonics caused by mains rectification on the input side. These harmonics are multiples of the mains frequencies. Existing standards define specific limit values since such harmonics can significantly lower the mains quality.

Mains system types

This refers to the types of mains supply systems. Systems differ in their method of earthing and the implementation of the phase wire, PE wire and central-point wire. Common mains systems include the TN, IT and TT networks. The individual mains types can also differ in their voltage levels and frequencies.



MTBF (mean time between failure)

The MTBF is a statistical value that specifies the probability that a product will fail. It is typically specified in hours and normally assumes a temperature of 25 °C. The probability of failure depends largely on the ambient surroundings. The key variables are the type of load and the ambient temperature.

W

O

Output characteristic curves	The output characteristic curves of power supply devices are determined by current and voltage. Unregulated devices do not have a current limit. In the case of an overload or short circuit, fuses or temperature switches are used to protect the device. Regulated devices are protected against overload and short circuits by means of various output characteristic curves. In this case, the system attempts to prevent any activation of fuses or temperature switches. The mandatory manual reset which follows an overload or short circuit can then be avoided. Common output characteristic curves include the hiccup mode, the foldback characteristic curve or the IU characteristic curve. → Hiccup mode, foldback characteristic curve, IU characteristic curve
Overvoltage category	Power supply units are classified into overvoltage categories according to the immunity against mains surges and transient voltages.

P

PELV (protective extra-low voltage)	This is a functional DC voltage with secure isolation according to EN 50178. As with SELV, a reinforced or double insulation is used between the primary and secondary sides. However, the secondary side is earthed.
PFC (power factor correction)	The power factor correction can be either passive or active in relation to power supply devices. The reactive power resulting from the bridge rectification puts a significant strain on the power supply network. The relatively poor power efficiency factor that results can be improved by using passive components (such as filters) or an active electronic mechanism. For switched-mode power supplies, PFC usually refers to the active variant of the power factor correction. Power factors of almost 1 can be reached when using an active PFC. Practically no reactive power is drawn from the mains supply network; therefore the strain on the mains network is relatively low.
Pollution severity	Pollution severity describes the environment and ambient conditions that a device requires in order for it to function smoothly. Significant environmental variables include condensation or air containing dust and oil.
Power-boost or boost	The power-boost function is the surge current handling capacity in the seconds to minutes range. This function is often required for starting up DC motors. DC motors have a high start-up current and often require several seconds before they have achieved their rated rotational speed. The power-boost function helps to optimise this start-up phase.
Power factor	The power factor is the ratio of reactive power to apparent power. It is an indicator of the device performance with respect to the load on the mains power network. Depending on the technology in use, the power factor for power supplies can be between 0.45 and nearly 1.

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Power loss	For power supply units, the power loss specification indicates the thermal output emitted during nominal (rated) operations. This is a key specification used by engineers when designing the climate control systems within electrical cabinets. It is calculated as the difference between the input and output power and can also take the degree of efficiency into account.
Power rating	The continual output permitted under the rated conditions.
Power supply units connected in series	Power supplies can only be connected in series when this is clearly permitted by the manufacturer. Such series connections are then normally tied to certain conditions. They can be used to increase the output voltage. This is not widely implemented.
Protection degree	According to DIN EN 60529, devices can be classified according to their protection degrees. The numeric code (for example, IP 20) defines two protection degrees: protection against touch or penetration by external objects (the first digit) and protection against water penetration (the second digit). Switched-mode power supplies intended for use in electrical cabinets or similar enclosures are often designed with IP 20 protection. The first digit (in this case, 2) ensures finger protection. The second digit (0) indicates that no protection against water is provided.
Pulsed current capacity	The pulsed current capacity describes the dynamic performance of a switched-mode power supply. Capacitive consumer loads, with their high inrush currents, put a particular strain on a switched-mode power supply. Peak values are reached (in the ms range) which amount to levels many times higher than the mains current. If the current control mechanism reacts too quickly, this can lead to voltage drops and can cause problems for loads which are connected in parallel. For this reason, power supplies are often equipped with a surge current limiting factor based on time. This allows a high current output for only a few ms which can be much higher than the rated current.

R

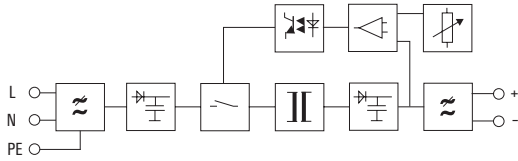
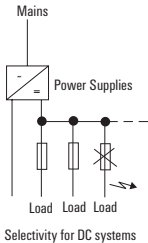
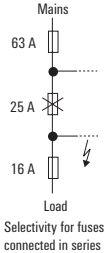
Rated control voltage	The nominal value of the sparkover voltage for the relay.
Rated input voltage	The input voltage required at which, under the normal mains voltage fluctuations, the output levels can be kept stable. It usually corresponds to the rated voltage for the electric utility's power grid.
Rated output current	The long-term current permitted under the rated conditions.
Rated output voltage	The nominal output voltage used for the rated specifications. It usually corresponds to the factory default output voltage.

Redundancy	A power supply system is considered redundant if it is constructed so that it has partial power supplies which are independent of each other and each of these can individually deliver the output load. When a fault occurs, therefore, it is still possible to continue to supply the connected rated load. In reality, at least two power supplies are connected in parallel using decoupling diodes. In this way, a short circuit in the output of one power supply will not lead to the failure of the entire power supply system. → Diode modules
Regulated power supply units	Switched-mode power supplies, as opposed to more common power supply units, have become established as the standard for the 10–1,000 W power range. They produce a stable output voltage with minimal residual ripple, even when influenced by fluctuations in the mains voltage, mains frequency or load. Their small size and weight is a result of their superior efficiency degree. The electronic control mechanism typically ensures a constant output voltage that varies $\pm 1\%$.
Residual ripple	The residual ripple describes the ratio of superimposed AC voltage to DC voltage on the output side of the power supplies. In addition to a percent specification, the superimposed ripple is often specified in mV_{ss} for switched-mode power supplies.
Resistance to shock	Resistance to shock refers to mechanical immunity against impacts in any direction. This is a key factor while the product is being transported.
Response time	The response time is the time that a power supply unit needs to compensate for a disturbance (for example, a load fluctuation).

S

Switching frequency	Switched-mode power supplies are normally operated with switching frequencies from 20 to 200 kHz. The HF or power transformer is switched on an off using transistors at this switching frequency. Small, compact units can be built with this method in comparison with the traditional 50/60 Hz transformers.
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Switched-mode power supply units	The switching pulse can be either primary or secondary. Thus there are primary switched-mode and secondary switched-mode power supply units. Secondary switched-mode power supply units are no longer of much significance. The primary switched-mode power supplies are now the focus of attention. The pulse refers to the high-frequency on and off switching of the transformer or transmitter in order to transmit energy. The high frequency allows the use of extra small inductive and capacitive components, particularly for the transmitter. In comparison to transformer-based power supply units, the weight and volume required are much reduced. 
Selectivity	When surge protection equipment is connected in series, selectivity refers to the ability of only one upstream fuse to trigger selectively in the event of an overload. The differentiation can take into account current or also time. With DC power supply systems, selectivity refers to the separate fusing of load circuits on the DC side. In this case as well, only the proper series fuse should trigger in the event of an overload. Fuses in DC circuits play a critical role since the power supplies must react to upcoming short circuits with a speedy cut-off or by limiting the current. Usually electronic fuses are used for this purpose. 
SELV (safety extra low voltage)	SELV refers to extra-low safety voltages according to IEC/EN 60950. Reinforced or doubled insulation between the primary and secondary sides is used to prevent electric shock. The output voltage here is sufficiently low so that it does not pose an injury risk if a person comes into direct contact.
Surge	A surge is a high-power voltage pulse which can be caused by, for example, a lightning strike. The switching operations from large consumer loads can also generate such voltage surges on the mains network. The surge test is used to demonstrate the immunity against high-power voltage pulses.

T

Temperature range	The temperature range specifies the minimum and maximum ambient temperatures for which a device can start up and run continuously.
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U

Unregulated power supply units	Unregulated power supplies consist mainly of a transformer, a rectifier and an Elkos filter. Since no controlling system is in place, mains voltage fluctuations influence the DC voltage side. Unregulated power supply units are very sturdy; they can be used in applications where a stabilised DC voltage is not necessary (for example, power supply to contactors).
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V

Vibration resistance	Vibration resistance describes the resistance against constant mechanical vibrations that occur during operations. Rail and ship applications place stricter demands for vibration resistance on the device.
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W

Wide-range input	Modern switched-mode power supplies often feature a wide input range. They can be run under a wide range of voltages: from min. to max. rated voltages including the tolerance limits. They do not require any manual range switching.
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