

The Energy Efficient Light Standard is Merely a Baseline

The energy efficient lighting standard for LED lamps and fixtures set by Design Lights Consortium (DLC) is gaining wider acceptance by utility companies for rebate. However, most people may not be aware that the standard itself is still evolving. Here is a summary of DLC requirements for 4-ft linear LED T8:

Requirements	Current Standard	Previous Standard
Bare Lamp Light Output	≥1,600 lm	≥2,200 lm
2-lamp In-Fixture Light Output	≥3,000 lm	≥4,000 lm
Minimum Lighting Efficacy: Bare Lamp	≥100 lm/w	-
Minimum Efficacy: In-Fixture	≥85 lm/w	-
Minimum CRI	80	80
Allowable CCT	≤5000K	≤5000K
Power Factor (PF)	≥0.9	≥0.9
Total Harmonic Distortion (THD)	≤20%	≤20%
L ₇₀ Lumen Maintenance	50,000 hrs	50,000 hrs
Minimum Luminaire Warranty	5 years	5 years

As opposed to the previous standard, the current one includes lighting efficacy and the adjustment of minimal light output requirements to accommodate directional LED light source.

However, when it comes to picking the right energy-efficient lighting products for actual projects, the DLC standard is merely a baseline, as it fails to consider other important factors:

- Installation time and costs can vary as much as 400%, depending on the LED tube lamp
- Few qualified LED tube lamps work with existing lamp-holders and most require the replacement of lamp-holders.
- Some LED tubes provide electrical shock hazard protection while others do not.
- Many LED tubes do not provide the extra protection needed when maintenance crews mistakenly insert a fluorescent tube into a fixture converted for LED tube use only, thereby exposing maintenance crews to risk and the subject company to work-related liabilities.

The first two factors mentioned above affect your overall project costs, the payback time and the ROI (return on investment). The last two factors are liability issues that are often overlooked until it is too late. To get the most for your money and have peace of mind, remember to include all these factors in your lighting project considerations.

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