

Frequently Asked Questions

Request for Information pertaining to Energy Conservation Standards for Distribution Transformers

1. What is the purpose of this notice?

This Request for Information (RFI) initiates the review process outlined by the Energy Policy and Conservation Act and seeks input from the public to assist DOE with its determination about whether new and/or amended energy conservation standards are warranted for distribution transformers.

Information received in response to this request will help DOE determine whether amending the energy efficiency requirements for distribution transformers would result in significant energy savings and whether such standards would be technologically feasible and economically justified.

This RFI is part of DOE's ongoing commitment to consider feedback from all interested stakeholders and promote an open and transparent rulemaking process.

2. What type of information is the Department looking for?

In this RFI, DOE seeks information related to the U.S. distribution transformers industry, technology, and market. In particular, DOE seeks information regarding developments in the market for electrical steel since publication of the 2013 energy conservation standards final rule. Because the grade and quality of steel used to manufacture distribution transformers impacts the efficiency of that transformer, it is important for DOE to understand the market, availability, production capabilities, and cost of various grades of electric steel in order to determine whether amending the efficiency requirements is economically justified.

3. What is a distribution transformer?

Distribution transformers are a component of the electrical power distribution system. They reduce higher voltages to levels required by end users. "Medium" voltage distribution transformers process input voltages of 600 to 34,500 and are generally operated by electrical power utilities, whereas "low" voltage distribution transformers are defined to operate at input voltages of 600 or less and are generally installed in commercial and industrial buildings.

4. How much energy do distribution transformers consume?

Per-unit transformer losses are relatively low, typically less than 2 percent of the total power handled by the transformer. Nationally, however, these losses are significant; they consume an estimated 0.9 percent of all energy supplied to the electrical grid, affecting electricity distribution utilities as consumers. Per-unit transformer losses are 2.4 percent of all electrical energy delivered to commercial and industrial consumers, for an estimated total of 0.3 quads of primary energy loss in 2016.

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

Approximately 1 million distribution transformer units are shipped annually in the United States.

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

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

7. How does an interested party comment on this notice and when are comments due?

The comment period for this rule will be 45 days, beginning on the date in which this notice publishes in the Federal Register. Interested parties may submit comments via the Federal e-Rulemaking Portal at <http://www.regulations.gov> or via email to DistributionTransformers2019STD0018@ee.doe.gov, identified with docket number EERE-2019-BT-STD-0005. Comments may also be submitted via postal mail or hand delivery by following the instructions found in the notice.