

Real energy savers now easier to recognise

New energy efficiency labelling of lamps

Lamps which are launched on the market after 1 September 2013 must bear the new EU energy efficiency label. The label will help consumers to assess whether a product uses a lot or only a little electricity. Very economical LED lamps are labelled in energy efficiency classes A+ and A++. Jochen Flasbarth, President of the Federal Environment Agency, remarks, "Inefficient lighting continues to waste electricity throughout the EU. The new label provides information about modern, energy saving lamps, halogen and LED. It has become easier to identify lamps that consume little power." Although lamp technology has developed at a very high pace in recent years, there is still great potential to further reduce power consumption. Information about brightness and mercury content should always be included. Manufacturers have been obliged to include this and other information about the properties of use for three years.

Up to now only incandescent light bulbs and energy saving lamps were required to bear energy efficiency labelling. Labelling has now been extended to a number of other lamp types, including LED and reflector lamps. The new energy efficiency label's appearance itself is not new, since many household appliances such as refrigerators, freezers or televisions already have it. The characteristic feature of the label is the colour scale, which illustrates power consumption. Green stands for high efficiency, yellow and orange for medium efficiency, and red stands for low efficiency. What is new on the label is the changed scale of efficiency, now ranging from Classes E to A++. The former, low efficiency classes F and G have been removed. Class A is subdivided into A, A+ and A++. As a result, Class A is no longer the highest standard. Lamps such as LED which are especially economical will fall into the A to A++ efficiency range. Energy saving lamps – more correctly known as compact fluorescent lamps – are in Classes A and B, whereas halogen lamps are almost exclusively in Classes C and D.

Since the new labelling requirement for lamps applies to products which are put on the market after 1 September 2013, shops still have stocks of lamps whose packaging has the old labelling which show classes A to G. In any event, packaging must include information on the following properties of use: light output – measurable in lumens, colour temperature, lifetime, number of switches before failure, lamp applications, warm-up

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time, and mercury content. Information on these properties has been a requirement for three years. If this information is not included on lamps that are on the market, the lamps are most likely not state of the art in lighting technology. Jochen Flasbarth said, “We recommend the purchase of lamps with labelling on the properties of use.”

An important point of orientation in choosing a lamp is light output, indicated in lumens. Light output or flux is a measurement of the brightness of a lamp. The wattage indicated on labels and which formerly provided guidance on light bulbs is no longer useful, for there is a great disparity in modern lamps despite identical light flux. Whereas a standard light bulb would need 60 watts to emit 710 lumens, a halogen lamp in bulb form needs about 50 W – and an energy saving lamp or LED a mere 12 to 15 watts.

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