

## Frequently Asked Questions

# Fluorescent Fixtures with Battery Back-up Systems

### ***Can I retrofit a battery back-up system with electronic ballasts?***

Some questions have arisen recently concerning retrofitting electronic ballasts into fluorescent fixtures having battery backup units. There are two types of systems in use for providing emergency lighting within the fixture itself. One system consists of a ballast and battery pack all in one unit. This self-contained system is typically used as a retrofit device; for example, if a new fire code is instituted that requires additional emergency fixtures. The second and more common method for OEMs is an arrangement that utilizes standard ballasts, and a separate device that contains the battery inverter unit.

The reason for this bulletin concerns the suitability of retrofitting T8 electronic ballasts into a fixture that has magnetic ballasts and this separate battery/inverter unit. Many of the major OEMs advise that there are several different types of battery inverter units used in fluorescent troffers. Generally it will not be a problem to remove the magnetic ballasts and replace them with electronic ballasts, however, there are certain battery inverter units which have been designed specifically for magnetic ballasts. These will be specifically marked as such.

This arrangement is typical for most if not all the fluorescent fixture manufacturers. We recommend that you speak to your various retrofitters and discuss this issue with them to ensure that they will not be retrofitting T8 electronic ballasts into the fixtures having battery backup units for magnetic ballasts only.

If a battery inverter unit is encountered that is designated magnetic ballasts only, there are two options:

1. Do not retrofit that fixture at all. This should not be a problem since the amount of fixtures with battery backup is relatively small.
2. Replace the separate battery inverter unit with one applicable for use with electronic ballasts.