



# Answers to Frequent Questions: “Enabling” ENERGY STAR® Features and Power Management

Updated: 10/15/2009

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## PURPOSE

This document defines what “enabled” means, with regard to ENERGY STAR® qualified monitors and computers.

## BACKGROUND

Executive Order (E.O.) 13514, *Federal Leadership in Environmental, Energy, and Economic Performance*, requires federal agencies to “enable power management on all eligible agency electronics.”

## FREQUENT QUESTIONS ABOUT ENABLING ENERGY STAR

### What is “power management”?

Power management refers to the utilization of ENERGY STAR features on ENERGY STAR qualified electronics, in order to save power. ENERGY STAR power management features — standard in Windows and Macintosh operating systems — place monitors and computers into a low-power “sleep mode” after a period of inactivity. Simply touching the mouse or keyboard “wakes” the computer and monitor in seconds. Power management features must be “enabled” on computer desktops, laptops and monitors to ensure power savings.

### What is “enabled”?

#### *Monitors*

- ENERGY STAR power management features are “enabled” if a monitor is set to enter “sleep” mode or turn off after a specified period of inactivity.
- The specified period of inactivity must be set to a specific time frame, and not “Never.”
- ENERGY STAR recommends that this time frame be set at 5 to 20 minutes of inactivity.

#### *Desktop Computers*

- ENERGY STAR power management features are “enabled” if a desktop computer is set to enter “system standby” or “hibernate” after a specified period of inactivity.
- The specified period of inactivity must be set to a specific time frame, and not “Never.”
- ENERGY STAR recommends that this time frame be set at 30 to 60 minutes of inactivity.
- The “Turn off hard disks” setting does not save much power, and can be ignored.



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### *Laptop Computers*

- ENERGY STAR power management features are “enabled” if a laptop monitor is set to enter “sleep” mode or turn off after a specified period of inactivity, and the laptop computer is set to enter “system standby” or “hibernate” after a specified period of inactivity.
- These power management features must be enabled in both the “plugged in” and “running on battery” modes.
- The specified period of inactivity must be set to a specific time frame, and not “Never,” but these time frames do not have to be the same for all components (monitor, computer) and modes (plugged in, running on battery).
- ENERGY STAR recommends that this time frame be set at 5 to 20 minutes of inactivity for the monitor and 30 to 60 minutes of inactivity for the computer.
- The “Turn off hard disks” setting does not save much AC power, and can be ignored in the “plugged in” power scheme.

Agencies and facilities may need to consider different time settings for different equipment or users, but always remember, the lower the time setting, the more energy and money you save!

### **Are “power management” and “enabling ENERGY STAR features” the same thing?**

Yes, utilizing power management and enabling ENERGY STAR features are the same activity and these terms are used interchangeably.

### **Should we require that ENERGY STAR features be enabled by manufacturers or vendors on equipment prior to shipment?**

Monitors can not be shipped with ENERGY STAR features enabled, since these features are controlled by the operating system on the computer or laptop that the monitor is connected to. If a manufacturer or vendor indicates that they ship monitors “ENERGY STAR enabled,” that simply means the monitor has the capability to accept power management settings from a computer or laptop.

Computers and laptops can be shipped with ENERGY STAR features enabled, as long as the installed operating system supports power management. In fact, in order to be qualified under the most recent ENERGY STAR computer specification, computer desktops and laptops must be shipped with ENERGY STAR features enabled. However, these settings may not be retained by your information technology department or contractor support after delivery. Computers and laptops are often reconfigured with operating system settings specific for your agency or facility.

Federal agencies and facilities should ensure that power management features are enabled and maintained after the computer, laptop and/or monitor is setup at a user’s workstation.



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### How can we track the enabling of ENERGY STAR features?

There are both open-source (free) and commercial software solutions to assist with the enabling of ENERGY STAR features, as well as tracking and verifying these activities. ENERGY STAR has a list of solutions on their Web site:

[http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=power\\_mgt.pr\\_power\\_mgt\\_implementation\\_res](http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=power_mgt.pr_power_mgt_implementation_res)

Reporting on the enabling of ENERGY STAR features on computers and monitors is required for the Federal Electronics Challenge Annual Reporting Form and may be required to demonstrate compliance with Executive Order 13514.

### REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

For more information on power management, or to get assistance in enabling monitor and computer power management at your organization, please visit the ENERGY STAR Web site at: <http://www.energystar.gov/powermanagement>.

Information about Executive Order 13514 is available at: <http://ofee.gov/execorders.asp>.

### CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have questions related to this resource or need other assistance with the Federal Electronics Challenge, please contact your Regional Champion. The list of FEC Regional Champions is available at <http://www.federalelectronicschallenge.net/champions.htm>.

Partners may also request technical assistance via email to [partner@electronicschallenge.net](mailto:partner@electronicschallenge.net).

### FEDERAL ELECTRONICS CHALLENGE

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