

California Adopts Battery Charger Standards; Federal Rule in Pipeline

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On January 12, 2012, the California Energy Commission adopted new energy efficiency standards for battery chargers for a wide range of products, including cell phones, laptop computers, power tools, cameras, electronic toothbrushes, golf carts, and forklift trucks. The standard, which will reduce charger energy consumption by an estimated 40 percent, will go into effect for most of the covered consumer products by February 2013. The implementation date for forklift trucks is January 2014.

Charger and product manufacturers are concerned about the California standard because a Department of Energy (DOE) proposed federal standard for battery chargers is currently under review at the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB). DOE's yet-to-be public proposed rule is anticipated to be effective in the summer of 2014. The DOE proposal, once adopted, is expected to preempt the California standards, and industry should be concerned about having to meet new federal requirements soon after it implements practices to meet the new California standards.