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Frequently Asked Questions Regarding the Purchase of PLS Software

1) What does my purchase include?

Your purchase of a single named user license to use PLS Software includes a download with the software and technical manual. Subscription licenses also include technical support and upgrades throughout the subscription period. Subscription Based Licenses (SBL) are filled electronically without any physical shipment requirement. For more information on SBL see https://www.powline.com/files/sbl_faq.pdf.

2) Can the software be installed on a network?

The software may be installed on a network file server so that only a single version needs to be installed, upgraded and backed up.

3) Can I run the software under Citrix Metaframe® or Windows Terminal Services®?

Yes, SBL versions will run in these environments.

4) Can I run the software in a virtual machine?

Yes, SBL versions will run in these environments.

5) What does technical support include?

Technical support includes assistance installing the software and making it run on your system. It also includes verifying that the software functions correctly as described in the manual, and fixing it in the event that it does not. Advanced questions regarding the (new) capabilities of the software are included.

6) What is not included in technical support?

Technical support does not include answering basic questions that are addressed in the manual, building models for you, consulting and interpretation of design codes, or training in the use of the software. Training is strongly recommended; see below for training information.

7) How should I obtain technical support?

Technical support is provided by email or telephone, with email being the preferred method especially for international clients.

In the event you require technical support following this procedure will minimize the amount of time it takes you to get an answer:

- 1) Technical support questions should be addressed in email to support@powerlinesystems.com. This allows for the question to be routed to the person most qualified to answer it and ensures the fastest response.
 - 2) If your question involves an error message from the program or a question about a specific model then submit the model with your question. To do this you should make a backup file (BAK) of the model using the *File/Backup* command. If the resulting BAK file is small (less than 10MB) you should be able to attach it to your email message; otherwise, you should check the “*Transmit file to PLS for technical support*” option provided in the Backup Options dialog displayed during the *File/Backup* process to have the file automatically sent to our server.
 - 3) If you are reporting a suspected bug then **include detailed instructions** on how to reproduce it (“first go to *Structure/Modify* then ...”). The more detailed your instructions are the faster we can answer your question. Your effort doing this will be appreciated since most (more than 90%) of reproducible problems are resolved the same day they are reported.
- Most questions that cannot be answered on the first exchange of email are due to the omission of a BAK file or a lack of specificity in describing the issue. This needlessly wastes everyone’s time.
- 4) If your question concerns the validity of a calculation then include what you believe the correct answer is as well as your hand calculations or other supporting material as well as a BAK file showing the results in question. Also include the program output, as well as whatever input was required to generate that output, in or attached to your email message. During the process of hand calculating a result, most clients convince themselves that the program generated result is correct (albeit sometimes surprising) or find an input error.

8) Do I need training to use this software?

We recommend three days of basic and two days of advanced training for users of PLS-CADD®. PLS-CADD is a large and comprehensive program covering the full gamut of terrain modeling, structural analysis, sag-tension and plan & profile sheet generation. Training will enable you to maximize your investment in the software. Users of TOWER® and PLS-POLE® also benefit from training, but if you are familiar with structural analysis or have used other structural analysis software it may not be necessary. Training is not generally required for users of SAGSEC® and CAISSON®.

9) Do you offer regularly scheduled training classes?

Yes, please see our web site at <https://www.powerlinesystems.com/classes> for details. We normally provide a PLS-CADD training session every 10-12 weeks in our corporate training center. A comprehensive TOWER training course is conducted once each year. Training is also conducted at various times and in various locations by our network of supporting agents/engineers.

10) How do I obtain upgrades?

Upgrades are delivered exclusively via the Internet. You should be able to download 100MB files via HTTPS to receive upgrades.

Upgrades may be downloaded directly from within the software using the *Help/Download Upgrade* command built into the software. Upgrades should be requested; they are not sent unsolicited. We announce the current shipping versions periodically in our email newsletter and also list them at <https://www.powerlinesystems.com/current-versions>, and the software may prompt you of the existence of updated versions. You may subscribe to the newsletter at <https://www.powline.com/forms/plsemail.html>. Software license contact information should include one end-user with access to the Help menu and may in addition include a non-user (such as an IT contact) for notification of upgrades.

11) How do I renew my subscription period?

Your subscription period starts the day you purchase the software and typically extends for one year. As you near the end of this period, the software will prompt you to contact us for a quote to renew for another year if you are interested.

If a renewal date other than your purchase anniversary date would work better with your budget cycle you may contact us to obtain a pro-rated quote for any date you choose. Subscription periods of less than 1 year are not available. The standard policy on renewal is that all PLS software licenses registered to your company are renewed to a common renewal date as a single set at a lump sum.

12) What is an Activation Fee?

The activation fee is a fee charged when a license is first purchased. As long as the license is renewed prior to expiration then the activation fee will not have to be paid again for that license. If a license lapses, then the activation fee will need to be paid to reinstate it.

13) What are the payment terms?

Standard payment terms require prepayment. U.S. electric utilities may send us a signed purchase order with Net 30 terms. Contracts and master agreements for software licensing and purchase are not accepted. International customers must pay in advance. Customers from countries listed on our Agents web page should consult with

our local representative regarding purchase and payment. Purchase and payment terms are indicated on a (proforma) invoice provided upon request for purchase of a software license or renewal.

14) What discounts are available?

Discounts are available for multiple licenses of the same program or for purchasing a bundle of software registered to the same company in the same country. Please contact our sales team (sales@powline.com) for a quote or fill out this form on our website at <https://www.powerlinesystems.com/see-how-we-can-help>.

15) What versions of Microsoft Windows® does the software support?

The software will run on the x64 editions of Windows 7, 8 and 10. Server versions of Windows (for example Windows Server 2016) are supported as file servers, but not for interactive execution from the console or remotely.

16) Are there any recommended hardware configurations?

The software will run on any computer capable of running the Windows versions listed above; however, to obtain good performance we have the following recommended minimum hardware configurations:

SAGSEC®, CAISSON®, PLS-CADD/LITE®:

No specific requirements

PLS-POLE®, TOWER®, SAPS®:

2 GB of RAM (8+ GB for Family Design in **TOWER**)

Core i5, Ryzen or better processor

These applications take advantage of multi-core/multi-processor computers and will execute a nonlinear analysis **as many times faster as you have cores**. For example, a quad core computer will run an analysis ~4x faster than a single core. For this reason, we strongly recommend multi-core computers.

PLS-CADD®:

- **Conventional ground survey projects:**

2 GB of RAM

Core i5, Ryzen or better processor

- **LIDAR, Digitizing, Aerial Imagery or SAPS Finite Element Sag-Tension:**

4-96 GB of RAM

Core i7, Ryzen or better processor

PLS-CADD makes some use of additional processor cores when available and future versions may extend this capability.

Notes:

1. You should allow 50MB of disk space for each program. User data may require tens of gigabytes of disk space for some PLS-CADD projects that involve aerial imagery or LIDAR derived data.
2. One or preferably two large monitors (24"+) with at least HD resolution will improve your experience.
3. PLS-CADD does not use 3D hardware accelerated video, so all that is needed is a fast 2D video card.
4. Due to their small cache, lower bus speeds and the resulting poor performance we discourage the use of Celeron® processors.
5. Intel Xeon®, AMD Ryzen® and Threadripper® processors are supported.
6. PLS-CADD benefits substantially from a solid state hard drive when working with LIDAR or aerial imagery. Likewise, working with these projects across a network can have a negative impact on performance.

17) I have budgeted \$N,NNN for a new computer. How should I spend it in order to obtain the best performance?

Please refer to the sample configurations from a talk at our last User's Group Meeting:

https://www.powline.com/usrgroup/madison19/handouts/2019_ATUG_HardwareAndOperatingSystemRecommendations.pdf

Please follow these steps which assume you start with a basic configuration and then continue improving it until your budget is exhausted.

1. Obtain the recommended amount of RAM listed for your application in #15 above. Note that the fastest processor in the world will not do you any good if it does not have enough memory.
2. TOWER and PLS-POLE : Upgrade to an 8 or 12 core processor.
3. Increase system memory to the maximum recommended amount of RAM from #15 above.
4. Increase the clock rate of your processor to the fastest available.
5. TOWER and PLS-POLE: upgrade to a 16 core processor to nearly halve the amount of time a nonlinear analysis of multiple load cases takes.
6. PLS-CADD: If you will store your projects locally on the machine (not on the network) then add a solid state hard drive.