

Frequently Asked Questions Regarding the Purchase of PLS Software

1) What does my purchase include?

Your purchase of a license to use PLS Software includes a CD with the software and technical manual, and a USB hardware key as required to enable the software license. License copies 1 through 6 also include one year of technical support and one year of upgrades. Technical support must be purchased separately when more than 6 licenses are involved. Shipping of the initial order by FedEx is included to all destinations in the US, and for all international orders of US\$4,000 or more. For international orders of less than US\$4,000, an additional shipping fee of US\$100 will be charged unless the order can be filled completely electronically.

2) Which programs use a hardware key?

PLS-CADD[®], PLS-POLE[®], SAPS[®] and TOWER[®] require a USB hardware key. SAGSEC[®] and CAISSON[®] do not require a key.

3) Can the software be installed on a network?

Yes, the software may be installed on a network file server so that only a single version needs to be installed, upgraded and backed up. However, for programs that require a key the key must be attached to the workstation executing the software. For programs that do not require a key, it is your responsibility to ensure that no more than the licensed number of copies of the software execute concurrently.

4) Can I run the software under Citrix Metaframe[®] or Windows Terminal Services[®]?

No, due to the graphically demanding nature of our products they are not compatible with the use of terminal server software.

5) What types of hardware keys are available?

USB hardware keys are available. Note that each USB key requires a free USB port (they cannot be piggybacked).

6) Can I run more than one program from the same hardware key?

Yes, we can place any combination of licenses onto a single key. For example, if you purchased PLS-CADD[®], TOWER[®] and PLS-POLE/STEEL[®] we could give you one key that enables all three programs, three separate keys that each enable only one of the programs or any combination of the two.

7) 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, including functional issues with the hardware keys. Advanced questions regarding the (new) capabilities of the software are included.

8) 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.

9) 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@powline.com. This allows for the question to be routed to the person most qualified to answer it.

- 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. If that does not work, you may use our online file transfer service at <https://www.powline.com/cgi-bin/upload.php>

- 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 fixed the same day they are reported.

The majority of 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. 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.

10) 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[®].

11) Are there regularly scheduled training classes offered?

Yes, please see our web site at <http://www.powline.com/news.html#training> for details. We normally provide a PLS-CADD training session every 8 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.

12) How do I renew my technical support and upgrade period?

Your technical support and upgrade period starts the day you purchase the software and 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 support and upgrades for another year if you are interested.

The default technical support and upgrade period starts and ends on the anniversary date of the purchase of the software license. For example, if you purchased the software on July 15, 2016 then your initial technical support and upgrade period would last through July 15, 2017. If you then renewed during the year after July 15, 2016 the default support period would be extended until July 15, 2018. A year of technical support and upgrades typically costs 15-19% of the current cost of all licenses registered to your company. In the event you did not renew until more than one year after expiration (say August 1, 2018 in our example) then the cost to renew would increase proportionally with time, and the renewal date will be set to the next anniversary date (in our example the renewal date would be July 15, 2019 and the cost would reflect a 2 year upgrade period). Therefore, there is no cost advantage to delaying renewal.

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. 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. Partial sets of program license/keys are not renewed unless the not to be renewed license/keys are returned to PLS.

You are not required to renew support, or have a support contract. In the case of expired support, the software will functionally be isolated to the condition/version you have at the time your support period expired. In the case of expired support, you will not receive any software updates or old versions, or hardware key or technical support until you renew. New licenses may not be added to expired license/keys without renewal of the expired licenses.

13) How do I obtain upgrades?

Upgrades are delivered exclusively by an email code and downloaded via the Internet. You should be able to download 100MB files via HTTPS in order 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.powline.com/current.html> , 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 download emails.

14) What are the payment terms?

Standard payment terms require prepayment. U.S. electric utilities may send us a signed purchase order with net30 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.

15) What discounts are available?

Discounts are applicable for multiple licenses of the same program are:

License Number	Discount
1	Full price (no discount)
2-5	30% off of full price
6+	50% off of full price

For example, purchasing two licenses would cost 1.7 times the cost of one license (full price for license #1 plus 70% of full price for license #2).

We operate as a mail order company and charge the same price throughout the world. Prices and payments are in US\$.

The multiple license discounts are only available for licenses owned by one company in a single country. Regional offices in different countries are treated as separate companies since they require separate shipping and technical support. Licenses cannot be resold without the written approval of Power Line Systems. At seven or more licenses, technical support must be purchased separately for all licenses of that product. For license/keys that are not in a valid support period, the existing licenses would be renewed/upgraded before additional licenses may be purchased at the discounts above.

Clients who take advantage of the 50% discount level must nominate a single point of contact for technical support and upgrades. This contact person will be the conduit for all technical support queries and will be responsible for redistributing any upgrades within the organization.

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

The software will run on the 32 bit and x64 editions of Windows Vista, Windows 7, 8 and 10. Server versions of Windows (for example Windows Server 2012) are supported as

file servers, but not for interactive execution from the console or remotely.

Windows 8 support starts with version 12.30. Windows 10 support starts with version 14.00.

We strongly encourage the use of an x64 edition of Windows (ideally Windows 7 x64). Please see Question # 17 for information regarding the new x64 edition of our software.

17A) Is there an x64 edition of the software available?

Yes. Starting with version 9.3, PLS-CADD, PLS-POLE and TOWER are available in a native x64 edition in addition to the 32 bit edition. The x64 edition has the same features and saves in the same file formats as the 32 bit edition. Both 64 and 32 bit editions are shipped and the install program recognizes the appropriate OS. However, on an x64 edition of Windows, the setup program will create shortcuts to the 64 bit edition instead of the 32 bit edition. You may distinguish between the 32 bit and x64 edition by the suffix "64" on the executable (for example, "tower64.exe" is the x64 edition of TOWER and "tower.exe" is the 32 bit edition).

17B) Are files saved in the x64 edition compatible with the 32 bit Edition?

The file formats are the same; however, it is possible to use the x64 edition to create a PLS-CADD project that is so large that it will give an "out of memory" error when you attempt to use the 32 bit edition to open it. TOWER and PLS-POLE models are always compatible across editions.

18) 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[®]:

1-2 GB of RAM (8+GB for Family Design in **TOWER**)

Core i5 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:**

1-2 GB of RAM

Core i5 or better processor

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

4-64GB of RAM

Core i7 or better processor

PLS-CADD can only use more than 2GB of RAM when running on x64 editions of Windows and can only use more than 4GB of RAM with the x64 edition of PLS-CADD.

PLS-CADD makes some use of additional processor cores when available and future versions will 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 (17"+) with at least XGA 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 (motherboard integrated graphics with shared memory are slow, a separate card is recommended).
4. Due to their small cache, lower bus speeds and the resulting poor performance we discourage the use of Celeron® processors.
5. Intel Xeon® and AMD Opteron® 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.

19) 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/madison15/handouts/Computer_Hardware_and_Operating_System_Recommendations.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 #18 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 6-8 core processor.
3. Increase system memory to the maximum recommended amount of RAM from #18 above.
4. Increase the clock rate of your processor to the fastest available.
5. TOWER and PLS-POLE: add a second octa core processor (total of 16 cores) 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.