

SURGE SUPPRESSOR & UNINTERRUPTIBLE POWER SUPPLY ("UPS")

WHY YOU NEED A UPS

Home offices and remote work made huge leaps in recent years. Prior to 2020, an office's "power situation" was not usually the lawyer's concern and working from home was rarely "make or break." Times have changed and a quality [remote and home office setup](#) are critical. You can no longer rely on IT staff or maintenance personnel to handle fundamental tech issues.

You must have a UPS or at least a surge suppressor on every computer in your office and home office. The uninterruptible power supply is an excellent surge suppressor, it will keep your computer running during power blips and makes sure you have "clean" power. If the power goes out when you're not there, it comes with software that will safely shut down your machine for you. It's worth the price for the peace of mind. Imagine that you're almost done with a brief due in an hour. As Murphy's Law would have it, the power goes out just as you're ready to print. If you had a good UPS, you would be able to finish and print even though your entire building was without power.

It is critically important that everything be plugged into a surge suppressor or uninterruptible power supply. When I say everything, I mean the switch/firewall/router, the monitor, the computer, and the printer. The fact that you must plug everything into a UPS may necessitate buying several of them.

PLAIN SURGE SUPPRESSORS

You can get plain surge suppressors that are good and every electrical device in your office or home office should at least be plugged into one of them (if not a UPS). However, they are not exactly cheap and can't keep your computer running in the event of a black-out or brown-out. Be advised that the cheapo power strips are just extension cords and aren't going to help you avoid problems. If you bought your surge suppressors in a 3 pack for \$9.95 at Wal-Mart, you've wasted your money.

WARNING ABOUT UPS VA RATINGS

Make sure the VA rating of your UPS is high enough to support the equipment you're plugging in. Determine a UPS's VA rating and then calculate the VA ratings (wattage) of what you're plugging in (amps x 120 volts). I had a client who had a Tripp Lite SmartUPS 1050 - (only 705 VA). He plugged in the following:

- Dell OptiPlex – 720 watts
- Dell monitor – 180 watts
- Printer – 936 watts

The first time the power went out, he fried his Tripp Lite and it wouldn't even work again. Since he exceeded the VA rating, his warranty was void. Sadly, the Dell representative the client bought the foregoing equipment from was the one who recommended the UPS. Since the computer alone exceeded the VA rating for the UPS, he obviously didn't know about this issue either.

WHAT YOU SHOULD PLUG INTO A UPS

Most UPSs have multiple outlets, some are designated both surge-suppressed and battery backed-up, and some are only surge-suppressed. With computers, I would only plug the computer and monitor into the battery backed-up outlets. Plug everything else into the surge-suppressed-only outlets. Printers and multifunction machines will overload most UPSs, even if the UPS is rated for 1,500 VA.

UPS RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NOTEBOOK COMPUTERS AND SMALLER DEVICES

Here are a few options to consider:

- APC Back-UPS [BE550G](#) ES 550VA, 120V, 8 NEMA outlets (~\$100)
- CyberPower [CP550SLG](#) 8-Outlets 550VA Surge Protected Battery Backup (~\$74)
- Eaton Tripp Lite [INTERNET550U](#) 550VA UPS (~\$85)

UPS RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COMPUTERS MONITORS, AND GENERAL OFFICE USE

Here are a few options to consider:

- APC Back-UPS [BR1500MS2](#) 1500 VA 900 Watt 10 Outlet Power Saving Back-UPS (~\$300)
- CyberPower Intelligent LCD Series [CP1500AVRLCD](#) UPS (~\$205)
- Eaton Tripp Lite [SMART1500LCDT](#) SmartPro LCD 120V 50/60Hz 1500VA 900W Line-Interactive UPS, AVR, Tower, LCD, USB, 10 Outlets (~\$270)