

Superior Heat Sink Design provides longer life for LED Retrofit Kits

Retrofit kits come in all different shapes and sizes, and if you look closer, there seems to be two types of techniques to keep a LED cool, active cooling or passive cooling. In layman terms, active cooling incorporates a fan and passive cooling doesn't. This discussion is about active cooling techniques, and in particular, the design of the heat sinks and the size of the fans and why that matters.

There appear to be 3 competing heat sink designs, those that are just plates of thin aluminum, and the more substantial heat sinks with fins and heat sinks with pins.

Most retrofit kits use a fin design, with a small fan mounted on the back to move air onto the heatsink and help move hot air away. Lately, a second design has been introduced, one that uses pins, made from a cold forged process, that includes a bigger fan, that appears to be a superior design. This design allows for more surface area yet is an extremely light weight design. This cold forged pin heat sink allows for the LED Retrofit kits to run cooler than a similar fan based fin system. Run the two products side by side for an hour, and you will notice a significant difference in heat. The pin heat sink runs cooler. And keeping electronics cool is a good thing, it makes for a longer life.

Now to be fair, in this test, the finned heat sink product was consuming 135 watts compared to 105 watts for the [pinned heat sink retrofit kit](#), but, the 105 watt retrofit kit also produced over 2400 more lumens. So it really is a fair test, both products are designed to replace 400 watt metal halide. The competitive product can be dialed down to 95 watts, but at that level it only produces 9447 lumens. So now it is producing 6000 less lumens, hardly a good comparison.

So when you are purchasing LED Retrofit Kits, look for the kits with the pinned heat sinks. They run cooler and produce more light more efficiently.

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