

500mA Low Voltage Step-Down Synchronous Switching Regulator

FEATURES

- 500mA Output Current at 3.3V Output
- Up to 92% Peak Efficiency
- 100% Maximum Duty Cycle
- Internal Reference Trimmed to 1%
- Output Can Source or Sink Current
- Requires as Few as Four External Components
- Input Voltage Range: 4V to 10V
- Adjustable Current Limit
- Small SO-8 Package
- 200kHz Switching Frequency Can Typically be Synchronized Up to 500kHz

APPLICATIONS

- Small Portable Digital Systems
- Active Termination
- Auxiliary Output Voltage Supplies
- Minimum Part Count/Size Switchers

DESCRIPTION

The LTC[®]1504A is a self-contained, high efficiency synchronous buck switching regulator. It includes a pair of on-chip 1.3Ω power switches, enabling it to supply up to 500mA of load current. Efficiency peaks at 92%, minimizing heat and wasted power. The synchronous buck architecture allows the output to source or sink current as required to keep the output voltage in regulation. 100% duty cycle operation minimizes dropout voltage.

The LTC1504A is available in adjustable and fixed 3.3V output versions. An adjustable current limit circuit provides protection from overloads. The internal 1% reference combined with a sophisticated voltage feedback loop provides optimum output voltage accuracy and fast load transient response. The LTC1504A is specified to operate with input voltages between 4V and 10V. Contact the LTC factory for guaranteed specifications at 2.7V supply.

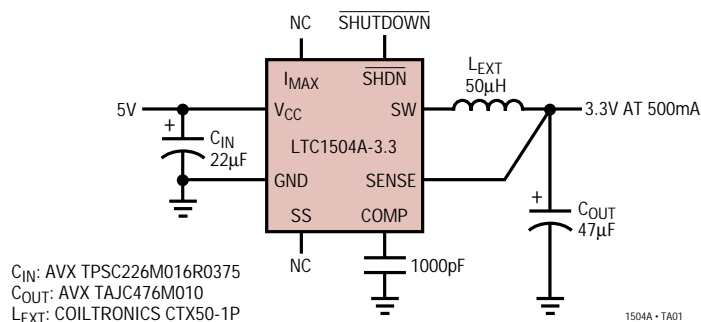
The LTC1504A is a pin-compatible, functional upgrade to the LTC1504.

The LTC1504A is available in a plastic SO-8 package.

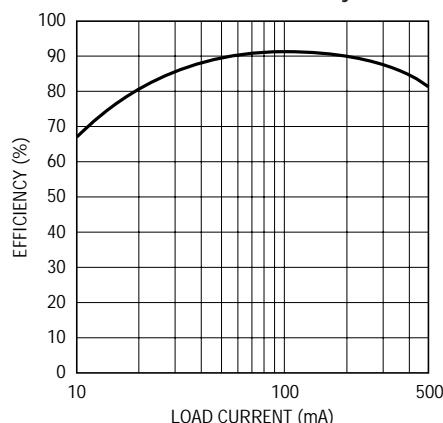
LT, LTC and LT are registered trademarks of Linear Technology Corporation.

TYPICAL APPLICATION

Minimum Part Count 5V to 3.3V Regulator



5V to 3.3V Efficiency



LTC1504A

ABSOLUTE MAXIMUM RATINGS

(Note 1)

Supply Voltage (V_{CC} to GND)	10V
Peak Output Current (SW)	$\pm 1A$
Input Voltage (All Other Pins)	$-0.3V$ to $(V_{CC} + 0.3V)$
Operating Temperature Range	
LTC1504AC	$0^{\circ}C$ to $70^{\circ}C$
LTC1504AI	$-40^{\circ}C$ to $85^{\circ}C$
Storage Temperature Range	$-65^{\circ}C$ to $150^{\circ}C$
Lead Temperature (Soldering, 10 sec)	$300^{\circ}C$

PACKAGE/ORDER INFORMATION

<p>TOP VIEW</p> <p>S8 PACKAGE 8-LEAD PLASTIC SO</p> <p>*FB FOR LTC1504A, SENSE FOR LTC1504A-3.3</p> <p>$T_{JMAX} = 125^{\circ}C$, $\theta_{JA} = 90^{\circ}C/W$</p>	ORDER PART NUMBER	
	LTC1504ACS8 LTC1504ACS8-3.3 LTC1504AIS8 LTC1504AIS8-3.3	
	S8 PART MARKING	
	1504A 1504AI 1504A33 04AI33	

Consult factory for Military grade parts.

ELECTRICAL CHARACTERISTICS

$V_{CC} = 5V$, $T_A = 25^{\circ}C$ unless otherwise specified. (Note 2)

SYMBOL	PARAMETER	CONDITIONS	MIN	TYP	MAX	UNITS
V_{CC}	Minimum Supply Voltage	(Note 7)	4			V
V_{FB}	Feedback Voltage	LTC1504ACS8	1.25	1.265	1.28	V
		LTC1504AIS8	1.23	1.265	1.29	V
ΔV_{FB}	Feedback Voltage PSRR	Figure 1, $4V \leq V_{CC} \leq 10V$, LTC1504ACS8		1.1	1.6	%
		Figure 1, $4V \leq V_{CC} \leq 10V$, LTC1504AIS8		1.1	1.8	%
V_{SENSE}	Sense Pin Voltage	LTC1504ACS8-3.3	3.20	3.30	3.40	V
ΔV_{SENSE}	Sense Voltage PSRR	Figure 1, $4V \leq V_{CC} \leq 10V$, LTC1504ACS8-3.3		1.2	1.8	%
		Figure 1, $4V \leq V_{CC} \leq 10V$, LTC1504AIS8-3.3		1.2	2.0	%
I_{CC}	Supply Current	Figure 1, $V_{SHDN} = V_{CC}$, $I_{OUT} = 0$ (Note 4)		3		mA
		Figure 1, $V_{SHDN} = V_{CC}$, $I_{OUT} = 0$, $V_{FB}/V_{SENSE} = V_{CC}$ (Note 4)		0.3	0.6	mA
		$V_{SHDN} = 0V$		1.0	20	μA
f_{OSC}	Internal Oscillator Frequency	Commercial	150	200	250	kHz
		Industrial	130	200	300	kHz
R_{SW}	Internal Switch Resistance	Commercial		1.3	2.0	Ω
		Industrial		1.3	2.2	Ω
V_{IH}	\overline{SHDN} Input High Voltage		2.4			V
V_{IL}	\overline{SHDN} Input Low Voltage				0.8	V
I_{IN}	\overline{SHDN} Input Current			± 0.1	± 1	μA
V_{OH}	Error Amplifier Positive Swing	Figure 2	4.5	4.95		V
V_{OL}	Error Amplifier Negative Swing	Figure 2		0.05	0.5	V
I_{OH}, I_{OL}	Error Amplifier Output Current	Figure 2	± 50	± 100	± 200	μA
g_{mV}	Error Amplifier Transconductance	Commercial (Note 5)	350	600	1100	μmho
		Industrial (Note 5)	300	600	1200	μmho
A_V	Error Amplifier DC Gain	(Note 5)	40	48		dB
g_{mI}	I_{LIM} Amplifier Transconductance	(Note 6)		2000		μmho
I_{MAX}	I_{MAX} Sink Current	$V_{IMAX} = V_{CC}$, Commercial	8	12	16	μA
		$V_{IMAX} = V_{CC}$, Industrial	8	12	17	μA

ELECTRICAL CHARACTERISTICS

$V_{CC} = 5V$, $T_A = 25^\circ C$ unless otherwise specified. (Note 2)

SYMBOL	PARAMETER	CONDITIONS	MIN	TYP	MAX	UNITS
I_{SS}	Soft Start Source Current	$V_{SS} = 0V$, Commercial $V_{SS} = 0V$, Industrial	● -8 ● -8	-12 -12	-16 -17	μA μA
t_r, t_f	Output Switch Rise/Fall Time	10% to 90% Output Swing	●	5	50	ns
DC_{MAX}	Maximum Duty Cycle	$V_{COMP} = V_{CC}$	● 100			%

The ● denotes specifications which apply over the full operating temperature range.

Note 1: Absolute Maximum Ratings are those values beyond which the life of the device may be impaired.

Note 2: All currents into device pins are positive; all currents out of device pins are negative. All voltages are referenced to ground unless otherwise specified.

Note 3: This parameter is guaranteed by correlation and is not tested directly.

Note 4: LTC1504A quiescent current is dominated by the gate drive current drawn by the onboard power switches. With FB or SENSE pulled to V_{CC} the output stage will stop switching and the static quiescent current can be observed. With FB or SENSE hooked up normally, the output stage will be switching and total dynamic supply current can be measured.

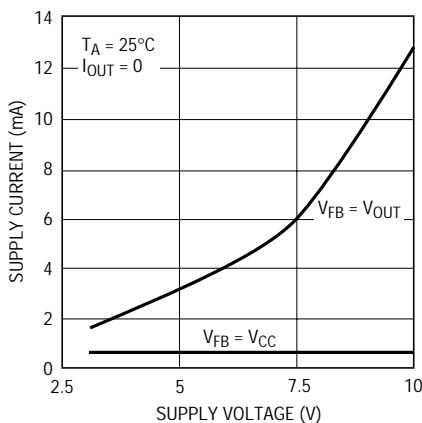
Note 5: Fixed output parts will appear to have g_{mV} and A_V values 2.6 times lower than the specified values, due to the internal divider resistors.

Note 6: The I_{LIM} amplifier can sink but not source current. Under normal (not current limited) operation, the I_{LIM} output current will be zero.

Note 7: Contact factory for guaranteed specifications at 2.7V supply.

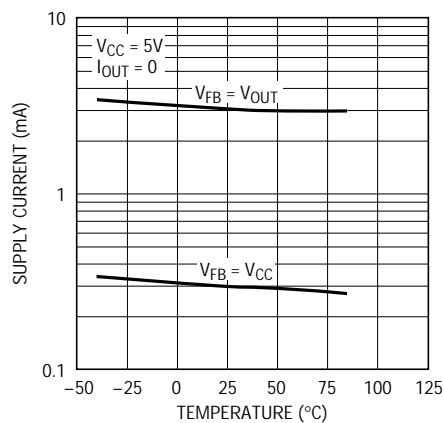
TYPICAL PERFORMANCE CHARACTERISTICS

Supply Current vs Supply Voltage



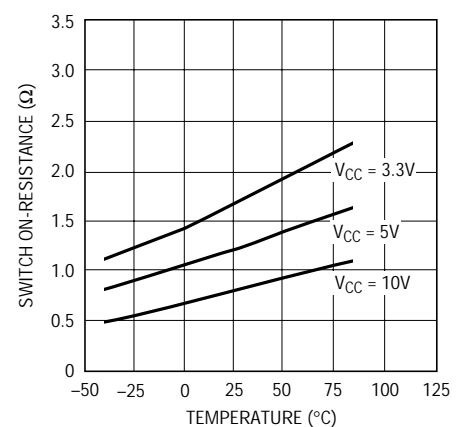
1504A • TPC01

Supply Current vs Temperature



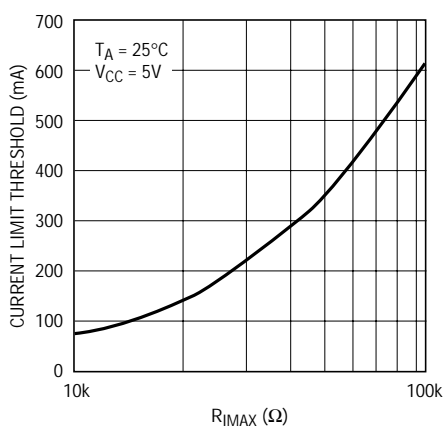
1504A • TPC02

Switch On-Resistance vs Temperature



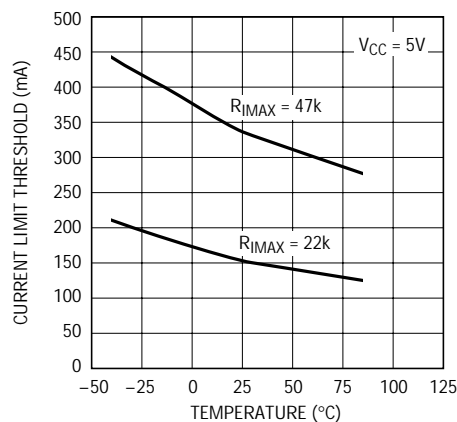
1504A • TPC03

Current Limit Threshold vs R_{IMAX}



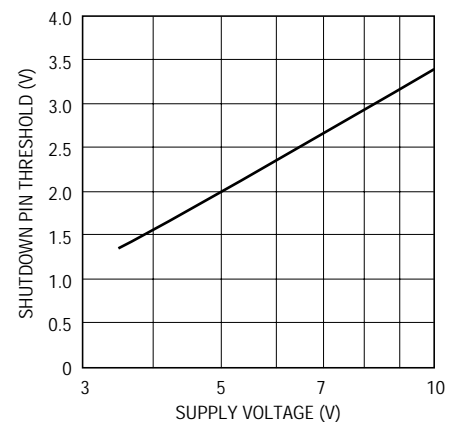
1504A • TPC04

Current Limit Threshold vs Temperature



1504A • TPC05

Shutdown Threshold vs Supply Voltage



1504A • TPC07

PIN FUNCTIONS

I_{MAX} (Pin 1): Current Limit Set. Connect a resistor from V_{CC} to I_{MAX} to set the current limit threshold. An internal 12μA current source from I_{MAX} to GND sets the voltage drop across this resistor. This voltage is compared to the voltage drop across the internal high-side switch (Q1) while it is turned on. See the Applications Information section for more information. To disable current limit, leave I_{MAX} floating.

V_{CC} (Pin 2): Power Supply Input. Connect to a power supply voltage between 4V and 10V. V_{CC} requires a low impedance bypass capacitor to ground, located as close as possible to the LTC1504A. See the Applications Information section for details on capacitor selection and placement.

SW (Pin 3): Power Switch Output. This is the switched node of the buck circuit. Connect SW to one end of the external inductor. The other end of the inductor should be connected to C_{OUT} and becomes the regulated output voltage. Avoid shorting SW to GND or V_{CC}.

GND (Pin 4): Ground. Connect to a low impedance ground. The input and output bypass capacitors and the feedback resistor divider (adjustable parts only) should be grounded as close to this pin as possible. Pin 4 acts as a heat sink in the LTC1504A S0-8 package and should be connected to as large a copper area as possible to improve thermal dissipation. See the Thermal Considerations section for more information.

FB (LTC1504A) (Pin 5): Feedback. Connect FB to a resistor divider from V_{OUT} to GND to set the regulated output

voltage. The LTC1504A feedback loop will servo the FB pin to 1.265V.

SENSE (LTC1504A-3.3) (Pin 5): Output Voltage Sense. Connect directly to the output voltage node. The LTC1504A-3.3 feedback loop will servo SENSE to 3.3V. SENSE is connected to an internal resistor divider which will load any external dividers. For output voltages other than 3.3V, use the LTC1504A.

SHDN (Pin 6): Shutdown, Active Low. When $\overline{\text{SHDN}}$ is at a logic High, the LTC1504A will operate normally. When SHDN is Low, the LTC1504A ceases all internal operation and supply current drops below 1μA. In shutdown, the SW pin is pulled low. This ensures that the output is actively shut off when SHDN is asserted, but it prevents other supplies from providing power to the output when the LTC1504A is inactive. See the Applications Information section for more details.

SS (Pin 7): Soft Start. Connect an external capacitor (usually 0.1μF) from SS to GND to limit the output rise time during power-up. C_{SS} also compensates the current limit loop, allowing the LTC1504A to enter and exit current limit cleanly. See the Applications Information section for more details.

COMP (Pin 8): External Compensation. An external RC network should be connected to COMP to compensate the feedback loop. COMP is connected to the output of the internal error amplifier.

BLOCK DIAGRAM

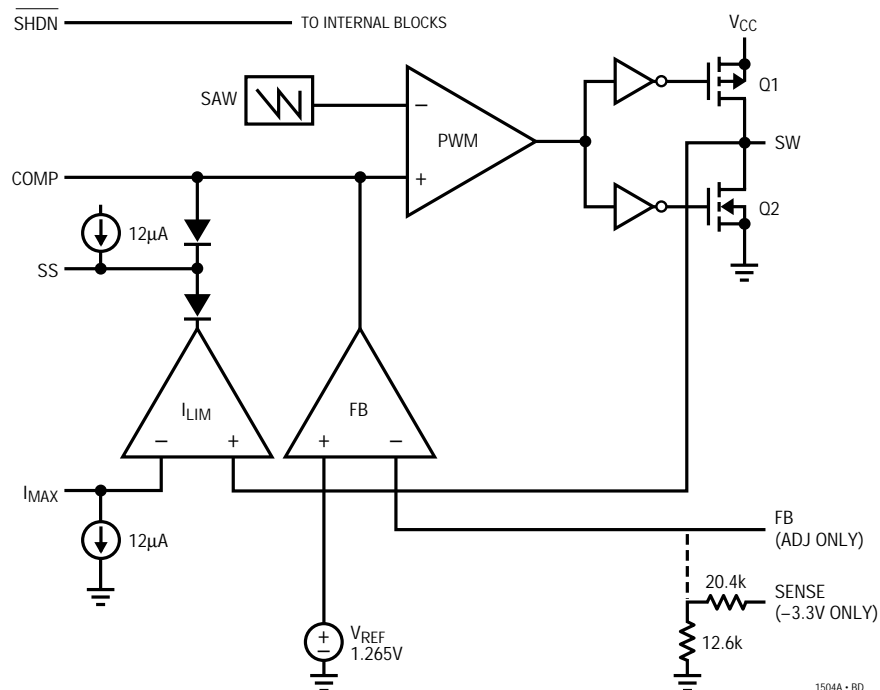


Figure 3. Block Diagram

TEST CIRCUITS

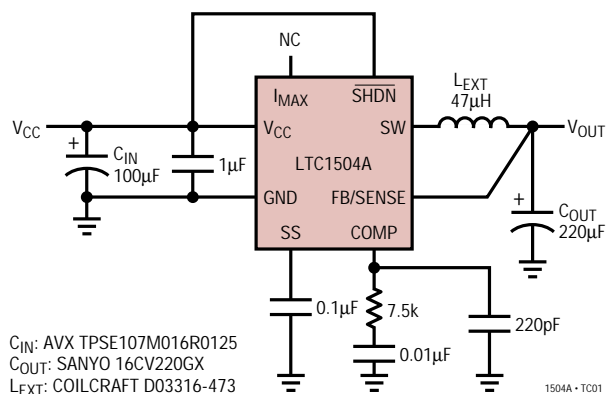


Figure 1

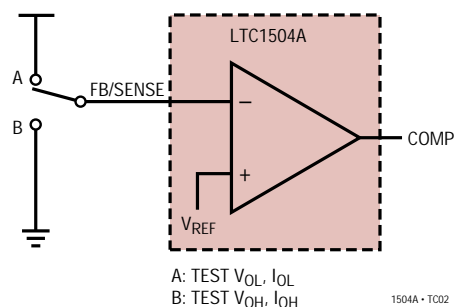


Figure 2

APPLICATIONS INFORMATION

OVERVIEW

The LTC1504A is a complete synchronous switching regulator controller (see Block Diagram). It includes two on-chip 1.3Ω power MOSFETs, eliminating the need for external power devices and minimizing external parts

count. The internal switches are set up as a synchronous buck converter with a P-channel device (Q1) from the input supply to the switching node and an N-channel device (Q2) as the synchronous rectifier device from the switching node to ground. An external inductor, input and

APPLICATIONS INFORMATION

output bypass capacitors and a compensation network complete the control loop. The LTC1504A adjustable output parts require an additional pair of resistors to set the output voltage. The LTC1504A-3.3 parts include an onboard resistor divider preset to a 3.3V output voltage. A functional 3.3V output regulator can be constructed with an LTC1504A-3.3 and as few as four external components.

The LTC1504A feedback loop includes a precision reference trimmed to 1% (V_{REF}), a wide bandwidth transconductance feedback amplifier (FB) and an onboard PWM generator (SAW and PWM). The PWM generator is capable of generating pulse widths from 0% to 100%, minimizing dropout and maximizing transient response. The internal sawtooth oscillator typically runs at 200kHz.

Q1 and Q2 are capable of carrying peak currents in excess of 500mA, with the continuous output power level limited primarily by the thermal dissipation of the SO-8 package. With a 5V input and a 3.3V output, the LTC1504A can supply 500mA of continuous output current with an appropriate layout. An on-chip current limit circuit, set with a single external resistor, can be used to help limit power dissipation. See the Thermal Considerations section for more information.

Theory of Operation

The LTC1504A primary feedback loop consists of the main error amplifier FB, the PWM generator, the output drive logic and the power switches. The loop is closed with the external inductor and the output bypass capacitor. The feedback amplifier senses the output voltage directly at the SENSE pin for fixed output versions or through an external resistor divider in the adjustable output version. This feedback voltage is compared to the 1.265V internal reference voltage by FB and an error signal is generated at the COMP pin. COMP is a high impedance node that is brought out to an external pin for optimizing the loop compensation.

COMP is compared to a 200kHz sawtooth wave by comparator PWM. The output stage takes the PWM signal and generates nonoverlapping drive for the onboard P- and N-channel power MOSFETs, which drive the SW pin with a low impedance image of the PWM waveform. Typical open-loop output impedance at SW is between 1 Ω and

3 Ω , depending on supply voltage. This high power pulse train is filtered by the external inductor and capacitor, providing a steady DC value at the output node. This node returns to FB or SENSE, closing the loop.

The LTC1504A includes a second feedback loop that controls operation in current limit. The I_{LIM} amplifier monitors the voltage at the SW pin while Q1 is on. It compares this voltage to the voltage at the I_{MAX} pin. As the peak current through Q1 rises, the voltage drop across it due to its R_{ON} increases proportionally. When SW drops below I_{MAX} , indicating the current through Q1 has increased beyond the desired value, I_{LIM} starts pulling a controlled amount of current out of SS, the external soft start pin. As SS falls, it pulls COMP down with it, limiting the duty cycle and reducing the output voltage to control the current. The speed at which the current limit circuit reacts is set by the value of the external soft start capacitor.

EXTERNAL COMPONENT SELECTION

External components required by the LTC1504A fall into three categories: input bypass, output filtering and compensation. Additional components to set up soft start and current limit are usually included as well. A minimum LTC1504A circuit can be constructed with as few as four external components; a circuit that utilizes all of the LTC1504A's functionality usually includes eight or nine external components, with two additional feedback resistors required for adjustable parts. See the Typical Applications section for examples of external component hookup.

Input Bypass

The input bypass capacitor is critical to proper LTC1504A operation. The LTC1504A includes a precision reference and a pair of high power switches feeding from the same V_{CC} pin. If V_{CC} does not have adequate bypassing, the switch pulses introduce enough ripple at V_{CC} to corrupt the reference voltage and the LTC1504A will not regulate accurately. Symptoms of inadequate bypassing include poor load regulation and/or erratic waveforms at the SW pin. If an oscilloscope won't trigger cleanly when looking at the SW pin, the LTC1504A doesn't have adequate input bypass.

APPLICATIONS INFORMATION

Ideally, the LTC1504A requires a low impedance bypass right at the chip and a larger reservoir capacitor that can be located somewhat farther away. This requirement usually can be met with a ceramic capacitor right next to the LTC1504A and an electrolytic capacitor (usually 10 μ F to 100 μ F, depending on expected load current) located somewhere nearby. In certain cases, the bulk capacitance requirement can be met by the output bypass of the input supply. Applications running at very high load currents or at input supply voltages greater than 6V may require the local ceramic capacitor to be 1 μ F or greater. In some cases, both the low impedance and bulk capacitance requirements can be met by a single capacitor, mounted very close to the LTC1504A. Low ESR organic semiconductor (OS-CON) electrolytic capacitors or surge tested surface mount tantalum capacitors can have low enough impedance to keep the LTC1504A happy in some circuits.

Often the RMS current capacity of the input bypass capacitors is more important to capacitor selection than value. Buck converters like the LTC1504A are hard on input capacitors, since the current flow alternates between the full load current and near zero during every clock cycle. In the worst case (50% duty cycle or $V_{OUT} = 0.5V_{IN}$) the RMS current flow in the input capacitor is half of the total load current plus half the ripple current in the inductor—perhaps 300mA in a typical 500mA load current application. This current flows through the ESR of the input bypass capacitor, heating it up and shortening its life, sometimes dramatically. Many ordinary electrolytic capacitors that look OK at first glance are not rated to withstand such currents—check the RMS current rating before you specify a device! If the RMS current rating isn't specified, it should not be used as an input bypass capacitor. Again, low ESR electrolytic and surge tested tantalums usually do well in LTC1504A applications and have high RMS current ratings. The local ceramic bypass capacitor usually has negligible ESR, allowing it to withstand large RMS currents without trouble. Table 1 shows typical surface mount capacitors that make acceptable input bypass capacitors in LTC1504A applications.

Inductor

The LTC1504A requires an external inductor to be connected from the switching node SW to the output node

Table 1. Representative Surface Mount Input Bypass Capacitors

PART	VALUE	ESR	MAX RMS	TYPE	HEIGHT
AVX					
TPSC226M016R0375	22 μ F	0.38 Ω	0.54A	Tantalum	2.6mm
TPSD476M016R0150	47 μ F	0.15 Ω	0.86A	Tantalum	2.9mm
TPSE107M016R0125	100 μ F	0.13 Ω	1.15A	Tantalum	4.1mm
1206YC105M	1 μ F	Low	>1A	X7R Ceramic	1.5mm
1210YG106Z	10 μ F	Low	>1A	Y5V Ceramic	1.7mm
Sanyo					
16SN33M	33 μ F	0.15 Ω	1.24A	OS-CON	7mm
16SN68M	68 μ F	0.1 Ω	1.65A	OS-CON	7mm
16CV100GX	100 μ F	0.44 Ω	0.23A*	Electrolytic	6mm
16CV220GX	220 μ F	0.34 Ω	0.28A*	Electrolytic	7.7mm
Sprague					
593D476X0016D2W	47 μ F	0.17 Ω	0.93A	Tantalum	2.8mm
593D107X0016E2W	100 μ	0.15 Ω	1.05A	Tantalum	4mm

*Note: Use multiple devices in parallel or limit output current to prevent capacitor overload.

where the load is connected. Inductor requirements are fairly straightforward; it must be rated to handle continuous DC current equal to the maximum load current plus half the ripple current and its value should be chosen based on the desired ripple current and/or the output current transient requirements. Large value inductors lower ripple current and decrease the required output capacitance, but limit the speed that the LTC1504A can change the output current, limiting output transient response. Small value inductors result in higher ripple currents and increase the demands on the output capacitor, but allow faster output current slew rates and are often smaller and cheaper for the same DC current rating. A typical inductor used in an LTC1504A application might have a maximum current rating between 500mA and 1A and an inductance between 33 μ H and 220 μ H.

Different core materials and shapes will change the size/current and price/current relationship of an inductor. Toroid or shielded pot cores in ferrite or permalloy materials are small and don't radiate much energy, but generally cost more than powdered iron rod core inductors with similar electrical characteristics. The choice of which style inductor to use often depends more on the price vs size requirements and any radiated field/EMI requirements than on what the LTC1504A requires to operate. Table 2 shows some typical surface mount inductors that work well in LTC1504A applications.

APPLICATIONS INFORMATION

Table 2. Representative Surface Mount Inductors

PART	VALUE	MAX DC	CORE TYPE	CORE MATERIAL	HEIGHT
CoilCraft					
DT3316-473	47 μ H	1A	Shielded	Ferrite	5.1mm
DT3316-104	100 μ H	0.8A	Shielded	Ferrite	5.1mm
DO1608-473	47 μ H	0.5A	Open	Ferrite	3.2mm
DO3316-224	220 μ H	0.8A	Open	Ferrite	5.5mm
Coiltronics					
CTX50-1	50 μ H	0.65A	Toroid	KoolM μ ®	4.2mm
CTX100-2	100 μ H	0.63A	Toroid	KoolM μ	6mm
CTX50-1P	50 μ H	0.66A	Toroid	Type 52	4.2mm
CTX100-2P	100 μ H	0.55A	Toroid	Type 52	6mm
TP3-470	47 μ H	0.55A	Toroid	Ferrite	2.2mm
TP3-470	47 μ H	0.72A	Toroid	Ferrite	3mm
Sumida					
CDRH62-470	47 μ H	0.54A	Shielded	Ferrite	3mm
CDRH73-101	100 μ H	0.50A	Shielded	Ferrite	3.4mm
CD43-470	47 μ H	0.54A	Open	Ferrite	3.2mm
CD54-101	100 μ H	0.52A	Open	Ferrite	4.5mm

Output Capacitor

The output capacitor affects the performance of the LTC1504A in a couple of ways: it provides the first line of defense during a transient load step and it has a large effect on the compensation required to keep the LTC1504A feedback loop stable. Transient load response of an LTC1504A circuit is controlled almost entirely by the output capacitor and the inductor. In steady load operation, the average current in the inductor will match the load current. When the load current changes suddenly, the inductor is suddenly carrying the wrong current and requires a finite amount of time to correct itself—at least several switch cycles with typical LTC1504A inductor values. Even if the LTC1504A had psychic abilities and could instantly assume the correct duty cycle, the rate of change of current in the inductor is still related to its value and cannot change instantaneously.

Until the inductor current adjusts to match the load current, the output capacitor has to make up the difference. Applications that require exceptional transient response (2% or better for instantaneous full-load steps) will require relatively large value, low ESR output capacitors. Applications with more moderate transient load requirements can often get away with traditional standard ESR

electrolytic capacitors at the output and can use larger valued inductors to minimize the required output capacitor value. Note that the RMS current in the output capacitor is slightly more than half of the inductor ripple current—much smaller than the RMS current in the input bypass capacitor. Output capacitor lifetime is usually not a factor in typical LTC1504A applications.

Large value ceramic capacitors used as output bypass capacitors provide excellent ESR characteristics but can cause loop compensation difficulties. See the Loop Compensation section.

Loop Compensation

Loop compensation is strongly affected by the output capacitor. From a loop stability point of view, the output inductor and capacitor form a series RLC resonant circuit, with the L set by the inductor value, the C by the value of the output capacitor and the R dominated by the output capacitor's ESR. The amplitude response and phase shift due to these components is compensated by a network of Rs and Cs at the COMP pin to (hopefully) close the feedback loop in a stable manner. Qualitatively, the L and C of the output stage form a 2nd order roll-off with 180° of phase shift; the R due to ESR forms a single zero at a somewhat higher frequency that reduces the roll-off to first order and reduces the phase shift to 90°.

If the output capacitor has a relatively high ESR, the zero comes in well before the initial phase shift gets all the way to 180° and the loop only requires a single small capacitor from COMP to GND to remain stable (Figure 4a). If, on the other hand, the output capacitor is a low ESR type to maximize transient response, the ESR zero can increase in frequency by a decade or more and the output stage phase shift can get awfully close to 180° before it turns around and comes back to 90°. Large value ceramic, OS-CON electrolytic and low impedance tantalum capacitors fall into this category. These loops require an additional zero to be inserted at the COMP pin; a series RC in parallel with a smaller C to ground will usually ensure stability. Figure 4b shows a typical compensation network which will optimize transient response with most output capacitors. Adjustable output parts can add a feedforward capacitor across the feedback resistor divider to further improve

Kool M μ is a registered trademark of Magnetics, Inc..

APPLICATIONS INFORMATION

phase margin. The typical applications in this data sheet show compensation values that work with several combinations of external components—use them as a starting point. For complex cases or stubborn oscillations, contact the LTC Applications Department.

External Schottky Diode

An external Schottky diode can be included across the internal N-channel switch (Q2) to improve efficiency at heavy loads. The diode carries the inductor current during the nonoverlap time while the LTC1504A turns Q1 off and Q2 on and prevents current from flowing in the intrinsic body diode in parallel with Q2. This diode will improve efficiency by a percentage point or two as output current approaches 500mA and can help minimize erratic behavior at very high peak current levels caused by excessive parasitic current flow through Q2. A Motorola MBRS0530L is usually adequate, with the cathode connected to SW and the anode connected to GND. Note that this diode is not required for normal operation and has a negligible effect on efficiency at low (< 250mA) output currents.

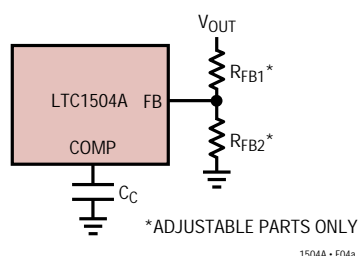


Figure 4a. Minimum Compensation Network

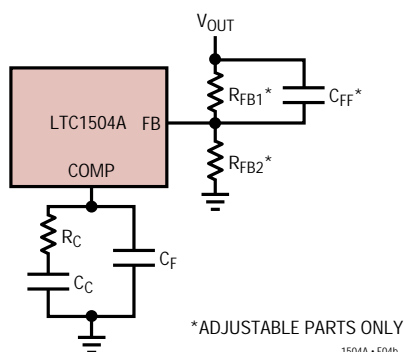


Figure 4b. Optimum Compensation Network

Soft Start and Current Limit

Soft start and current limit are linked in the LTC1504A. Soft start works in a straightforward manner. An internal 12 μ A current source connected to the SS pin will pull up an external capacitor connected from SS to GND at a rate determined by the capacitor value. COMP is clamped to a voltage one diode drop above SS; as SS rises, COMP will rise at the same rate. When COMP reaches roughly 2V below V_{CC} , the duty cycle will slowly begin to increase until the output comes into regulation. As SS continues to rise, the feedback amplifier takes over at COMP, the clamp releases and SS rises to V_{CC} .

Current limit operates by pulling down on the soft start pin when it senses an overload condition at the output. The current limit amplifier (I_{LIM}) compares the voltage drop across the internal P-channel switch (Q1) during its on time to the voltage at the I_{MAX} pin. I_{MAX} includes an internal 12 μ A pull-down, allowing the voltage to be set by a single resistor between V_{CC} and I_{MAX} . When the IR drop across Q1 exceeds the drop across the I_{MAX} resistor, I_{LIM} pulls current out of the external soft start capacitor, reducing the voltage at SS. A soft start capacitor should always be used if current limit is enabled. SS, in turn, pulls down on COMP, limiting the output duty cycle and controlling the output current. When the current overload is removed, the I_{LIM} amplifier lets go of SS and allows it to rise again as if it were completing a soft start cycle. The size of the external soft start capacitor controls both how fast the current limit responds once an overload is detected and how fast the output recovers once the overload is removed. The soft start capacitor also compensates the feedback loop created by the I_{LIM} amplifier. Because the I_{LIM} loop is a current feedback loop, the additional phase shift due to the output inductor and capacitor do not come into play and the loop can be adequately compensated with a single capacitor. Usually a 0.1 μ F ceramic capacitor from SS to GND provides adequate soft start behavior and acceptable current limit response.

This type of current limit circuit works well with mild current overloads and eliminates the need for an external current sensing resistor, making it attractive for LTC1504A applications. These same features also handicap the current limit circuit under severe short circuits when the

APPLICATIONS INFORMATION

output voltage is very close to ground. Under this condition, the LTC1504A must run at extremely narrow duty cycles (<5%) to keep the current under control. When the on-time falls below the time required to sense the current in Q1, the LTC1504A responds by reducing the oscillator frequency, increasing the off-time to decrease the duty cycle and allow it to maintain some control of the output current. The oscillator frequency may drop by as much as a factor of 10 under severe current overloads.

Under extreme short circuits (e.g., screwdriver to ground) the on-time will reduce to the point where the LTC1504A will lose control of the output current. At this point, output current will rise until the inductor saturates, and the current will be limited by the parasitic ESL of the inductor and the R_{ON} of Q2 inside the LTC1504A. This current is usually nondestructive and dissipates a limited amount of power since the output voltage is very low. A typical LTC1504A circuit can withstand such a short for many seconds without damage. The test circuit in Figure 1 will typically withstand a direct output short for more than 30 seconds without damage to the LTC1504A. Eventually, however, a continuous short may cause the die temperature to rise to destructive levels.

Note that the current limit is primarily designed to protect the LTC1504A from damage and is not intended to be used to generate an accurate constant-current output. As the die temperature varies in a current limited condition, the R_{ON} of the internal switches will change and the current limit threshold will move around. R_{ON} will also vary from part to part due to manufacturing tolerance. The external I_{MAX} resistor should be chosen to allow enough room to account for these variations without allowing the current limit to engage at the maximum expected load current. A current limit setting roughly double the expected load is often a good compromise, eliminating unintended current limit operation while preventing circuit destruction under actual fault conditions. If desired, current limit can be disabled by floating the I_{MAX} pin; the internal current source will pull I_{MAX} to GND and the I_{LIM} amplifier will be disabled.

Shutdown

The LTC1504A includes a micropower shutdown mode controlled by the logic level at \overline{SHDN} . A logic High at \overline{SHDN}

allows the part to operate normally. A logic Low at \overline{SHDN} stops all internal switching, pulls COMP, SS and SW to GND and drops quiescent current below 1 μ A typically. Note that the internal N-channel power MOSFET from SW to GND turns on when \overline{SHDN} is asserted. This ensures that the output voltage drops to zero when the LTC1504A is shut down, but prevents other devices from powering the output when the LTC1504A is disabled.

External Clock Synchronization

The LTC1504A \overline{SHDN} pin can double as an external clock input for applications that require a synchronized clock or a faster switching speed. The \overline{SHDN} pin terminates the internal sawtooth wave and resets the oscillator immediately when it goes low, but waits 50 μ s before shutting down the rest of the internal circuitry. A clock signal applied directly to the \overline{SHDN} pin will force the LTC1504A internal oscillator to lock to its frequency as long as the external clock runs faster than the internal oscillator frequency. Attempting to synchronize to a frequency lower than the 250kHz maximum internal frequency may result in inconsistent pulse widths and is not recommended.

Because the sawtooth waveform rises at a fixed rate internally, terminating it early by synchronizing to a fast external clock will reduce the amplitude of the sawtooth wave that the PWM comparator sees, effectively raising the gain from COMP to SW. 500kHz is the maximum recommended synchronization frequency; higher frequencies will reduce the sawtooth amplitude to the point that the LTC1504A may run erratically.

THERMAL CONSIDERATIONS

Each of the LTC1504A internal power switches has approximately 1.3 Ω of resistance at room temperature and will happily carry more than the rated maximum current if the current limit is set very high or is not connected. Since the inductor current is always flowing through one or the other of the internal switches, a typical application supplying 500mA of load current will cause a continuous dissipation of approximately 325mW. The SO-8 package has a thermal resistance of approximately 90°C/W, meaning that the die will begin to rise toward 30°C above ambient

APPLICATIONS INFORMATION

at this power level. The R_{ON} of the internal power switches increases as the die temperature rises, increasing the power dissipation as the feedback loop continues to keep the output current at 500mA. At high ambient temperatures, this cycle may continue until the chip melts, since the LTC1504A does not include any form of thermal shutdown. Applications can safely draw peak currents above the 500mA level, but the average power dissipation should be carefully calculated so that the maximum 125°C die temperature is not exceeded.

The LTC1504A dissipates the majority of its heat through its pins, especially GND (Pin 4). Thermal resistance to ambient can be optimized by connecting GND to a large copper region on the PCB, which will serve as a heat sink. Applications which will operate the LTC1504A near maximum power levels or which must withstand short circuits of extended duration should maximize the copper area at all pins and ensure that there is some airflow over the part to carry away excess heat. For layout assistance in situations where power dissipation may be a concern, contact the LTC Applications Department.

The current limit circuit can be used to limit the power under mild overloads to a safe level, but severe overloads where the output is shorted to ground may still cause the die temperature to rise dangerously. For more information on current limit behavior, see the Current Limit section.

LAYOUT CONSIDERATIONS

Like all precision switching regulators, the LTC1504A requires special care in layout to ensure optimum performance. The large peak currents coupled with significant DC current flow will conspire to keep the output from regulating properly if the layout is not carefully planned. A poorly laid out op amp or data converter circuit will fail to give the desired performance, but will usually still act like an op amp or data converter. A poorly laid out LTC1504A circuit may look nothing at all like a regulator. *Wire-wrap or plug-in prototyping boards are not useful for breadboarding LTC1504A circuits!* Open-core inductors located close to the LTC1504A can cause erratic regulation due to stray flux coupled into PC board traces or the LTC1504A itself. Changing the orientation of the inductor or switching to a shielded type will solve the problem.

Perhaps most critical to proper LTC1504A performance is the layout of the ground node and the location of the input and output capacitors. The negative terminals of both the input and output bypass capacitors should come together at the same point, as close as possible to the LTC1504A ground pin. The compensation network and soft start capacitor can be connected together with their own trace, which should come directly back to this same common ground point. The input supply ground and the load return should also connect to this common point. Each ground line should come to a star connection with Pin 4 at the center of the star. This node should be a fairly large copper region to act as a heat sink if required.

Second in importance is the proximity of the low ESR (usually ceramic) input bypass capacitor. It should be located as close to the LTC1504A V_{CC} and GND pins as physically possible. Ideally, the capacitor should be located right next to the package, straddling the SW pin. High peak current applications or applications with V_{CC} greater than 6V may require a 1 μ F or larger ceramic capacitor in this position.

One node that isn't quite so critical is SW. Extra lead length or narrow traces at this pin will only add parasitic inductance in series with the external inductor, slightly raising its value. The SW trace need only be wide enough to support the maximum peak current under short circuit conditions—perhaps 1A. If a trace needs to be compromised to make the layout work, this is the one. Note that long traces at the SW node may aggravate EMI considerations—don't get carried away. If a Schottky diode is used at the SW node, it should be located at the LTC1504A end of the trace, close to the device pins.

The LTC Applications Department has constructed literally hundreds of layouts for the LTC1504A and related parts, many of which worked and some of which are now archived in the Bad Layout Hall of Fame. If you need layout assistance or you think you have a candidate layout for the Hall of Fame, give Applications a call at (408) 954-8400. Demo boards with properly designed layouts are available and specialized layouts can be designed if required. The applications team is also experienced in external component selection for a wide variety of applications, and they have a never-ending selection of tall tales to tell as well. When in doubt, give them a call.

