



Frequently Asked Questions

SpecView from Watlow HMI Software

Do I need the multi-port option?

If all the devices are not connected to the same communications port on the computer, you will need the multi-port option. If some devices will communicate via Ethernet and some via a serial port, then you will need the multi-port option. For example if you want to communicate with one or more EZ-ZONE[®] PMs via Ethernet/Modbus TCP and one or more SERIES 96 controllers via 485 and Modbus RTU, you will need the multi-port option. When there are many devices, even if all of the devices are the same type, it may be beneficial to connect them via more than one network for increased polling speed.

Can you mix of models of controllers on a single serial communications port?

Yes, as long as all the controllers are using the same protocol (Modbus RTU) and baud rate. Because not all devices are supported by the same protocol driver, you may have to scan the network more than once.

When should I choose the strategy controller option?

If you want to automate things for users, the strategy controller allows you to configure SpecView from Watlow to monitor for *events* such as specific parameter values and respond automatically with *actions* such as printing the screen, starting logging or downloading a recipe. Events can also be time or calendar based. Without the strategy controller the software allows up to two such events.

What option or options do I need to purchase to log process data?

Without any optional features SpecView from Watlow can perform time-based recording of user selected parameters and variables. By default data is recorded each minute, and this rate may be set as fast as one second. Logged data is stored in encrypted files for security. The data files can be used to create log reports in CSV (comma separated variable) format. These Excel-compatible files contain user-specified data over a user-defined time period. The strategy controller option can be used to automate many data logging related tasks including generating reports.

When should I choose the historical replay option?

The historical replay feature *replays* logged data on any user-created screen. If all of the data points on the screen had been set to log, the replayed screen presents data exactly as it did when the data was collected. Screens can be replayed in real time or at a user-set, accelerated rate. Without the historical replay option, you can replay only up to the last four hours of data.

Do I need the SERIES F4 programmer option?

If you want to program SERIES F4 profiles in SpecView from Watlow, store profiles as recipes on the computer and download them to the F4, you will want the SERIES F4 programmer option. If you will program the F4 profiles via the controller's front panel interface and want to use SpecView from Watlow just to start and stop profiles and graph and log data from the F4, then you do not need the SERIES F4 programmer option.

Do I need a special driver for programming profiles with controllers other than the SERIES F4?

The way the SERIES F4 allows access to its 256 ramp soak steps via Modbus requires a special protocol driver in SpecView from Watlow, but other ramping controllers such as the EZ-ZONE PM have a simpler arrangement and no special driver is required.

How could I use the DDE option?

DDE or Dynamic Data Exchange is a Windows standard for communications between Windows programs. It can be used to get or set variables in SpecView from Watlow from another program such as

Microsoft Excel. Implementing a DDE connection requires software programming expertise. For example, to get variable values from SpecView from Watlow into an Excel spreadsheet requires working knowledge of Visual Basic for Applications programming. This option has most frequently been used to integrate customer written custom applications. ActiveX has to a great extent supplanted DDE. If you want to integrate SpecView from Watlow with applications that support DDE, you will want the DDE option, but consider ActiveX.

How could I use the OPC client option?

The OPC client option allows SpecView from Watlow to connect to a third-party local OPC server, such as Kepware, get data from the OPC server and present sets of data as one or more instruments with associated variables. Currently this functionality is limited to OPC servers running on the same computer as SpecView from Watlow.

What is the ActiveX container option for?

The ActiveX container option allows you to add ActiveX controls to your graphical display windows in SpecView from Watlow. These add-ins are available from companies such as Software Toolbox Inc. (www.softwaretoolbox.com) or some customers may choose to write their own. ActiveX controls may be simply graphical with no interactive or functional properties such as a depiction of a pipe, they may be graphical and functional such as a graphic of a valve that can be controlled by a SpecView from Watlow variable to show the current state of the valve based, or ActiveX controls may be purely function with no graphical component such as a calculation outputting results to a SpecView from Watlow variable. Using purely graphical ActiveX elements with no interactivity does not require the ActiveX option. If you want to incorporate third-party ActiveX controls that interact with SpecView from Watlow variables, you will want the ActiveX container option.

How can I use the remote user option?

The remote user option allows the specified number of remote computers running SpecView to connect to the local copy that is communicating with controllers. The local copy must have the remote user option and the number of connections allowed at any time is limited by the local copy's key. The remote copies do not require keys. The remote copies can be allowed read-only access or full access to the local screens and controllers. The remote copy can connect via a local area network, a wide area network, the internet or a modem. The remote user option can be used to implement multiple user interfaces to a single piece of equipment which is useful when equipment is large and user interfaces are required at more than one position. The remote user option can also be used to facilitate monitoring of equipment from a remote location for supervision or service.

What devices can be communicated with using the Allen-Bradley driver option?

The Allen-Bradley driver option supports the DF1 protocol which is either standard or an option on Allen-Bradley PLCs such as PLC5, SLC500, ControlLogix, MicroLogix and CompactLogix.

Is SpecView from Watlow different than what you get purchasing directly from SpecView Corp.?

The installed software is exactly the same, however, when you purchase SpecView from Watlow, you get a special key that identifies the product as SpecView from Watlow, additional documentation that helps get the software up and running with Watlow products, and a single point of support for Watlow controllers and SpecView from Watlow, the Watlow applications engineers in Winona and elsewhere that are one-stop shopping for answers about hardware, communications wiring and controller and software functions.

How can I upgrade my copy of SpecView from Watlow?

SpecView from Watlow is field upgradeable. There is no need to return anything to Watlow for the upgrade. If you find that you want to add features to an existing copy of SpecView from Watlow, contact your Watlow agent or distributor about upgrading.

What is the mini option? What is meant by "limited to two instrument views".

The mini option is for systems that need to communicate with only one or two devices. In SpecView for Watlow an *instrument* is the group of parameters that shows up in the variable list in configuration mode as an instrument and that is represented by an *instrument view* on a graphical display window. More

complex controllers such as ramping controllers are often presented as two or more instruments. The mini option may be appropriate for one such ramping controller, but could not be used if the system had more than one. The mini option would also work for a non-ramping controller and a limit, but probably not for a multi-loop controller such as the CLS200 that includes one instrument view for each loop.

Is SpecView from Watlow available for download on the Watlow website?

Yes, you can find the link on the SpecView from Watlow page under Products, Software and Gateways.

Is it possible to restrict access to some items on a screen with password protection while allowing access freely to others?

Yes, the password level requirement can be individually set for each item on a screen.

How do you upgrade and add a feature to a copy of SpecView from Watlow that is already in use?

SpecView from Watlow has a feature that allows the user to request a feature upgrade in the field. There is a part number for the upgrade that allows the user to choose the features he wants to add. The user needs to provide a code that is generated by the installation of SpecView from Watlow and purchase the new features. Watlow provides a set of codes that the user enters into SpecView from Watlow that enable the features in the key.

What happens if someone orders an upgrade that he already has?

Watlow may not catch the error. The user has to go to the screen that lists all the options they have in order to get the upgrade code, so they have a chance to see what they have and should be careful to order only options they want. If in doubt, contact technical support for help determining which options are present.