

TI Designs: TIDA-01566

Light Load Efficient, Low Noise Power Supply Reference Design for Wearables and IoT



Description

This reference design demonstrates an ultra-small power supply solution (8.5 mm² total) for an efficient and low-noise rail in portable personal electronic devices, such as wearables, smart watches, smartphones, headsets, headphones, earbuds, and embedded camera systems. A low dropout (LDO) linear regulator follows a DC/DC converter to deliver the same low-noise performance of an LDO with the high efficiency of a DC/DC converter. The overall no load input current (also known as switching I_Q) of only 8 μ A maintains higher efficiency than an LDO-only based design, while the near 100- μ V output noise cleanly powers the sensitive load better than a DC/DC-only design. This design guide documents and compares the critical performance characteristics, such as efficiency, I_Q , ripple, and so forth, of all three design types: LDO only, DC/DC only, and LDO after DC/DC.

Resources

[TIDA-01566](#)

Design Folder

[TPS62801](#)

Product Folder

[TPS7A10](#)

Product Folder

Features

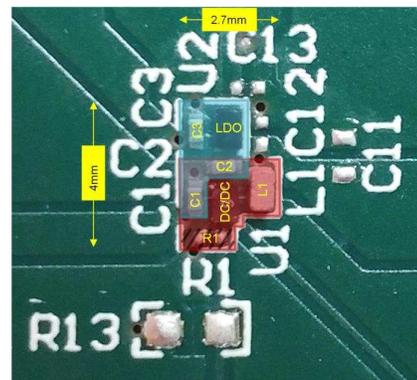
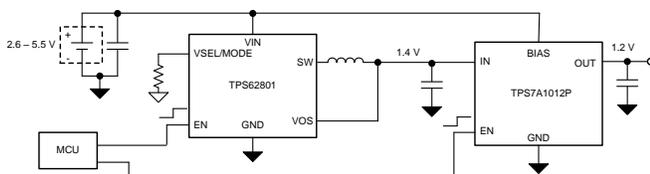
- Solution size of 8.5 mm² and height below 0.65 mm
- No load input current (switching I_Q) of 8 μ A
- Near 100- μ V output noise (10 Hz to 100 kHz)
- Simple output voltage adjustment down to 0.5 V
- Input voltage range of 2.6 V to 5.5 V for 1.2 V_{OUT}
- LDO with 300-mA output current (1 A at DC/DC output)

Applications

- [Wearable Fitness and Activity Monitor](#)
- [Smart Watch](#)
- [Smartphone](#)
- [Headsets, Headphones and Earbuds](#)
- [Embedded Camera System](#)



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1 System Description

The TIDA-01566 optimizes both the TPS62801 DC/DC converter and the TPS7A10 LDO to produce an ultra-small, efficient, low noise 1.2-V supply from a single-cell, rechargeable lithium battery. The DC/DC operates in power save mode for maximum efficiency at light loads. In power save mode, it reduces the switching frequency to save power. This increases the output ripple, while decreasing the frequency of this ripple. Both the lower frequency and higher magnitude ripple may not be acceptable to some sensitive loads, such as sensors, data converters, global positioning system (GPS) receivers, wireless communication devices (for example, Bluetooth and Narrowband IoT (NB-IoT)), and so on.

To overcome the challenge of higher ripple, an LDO is added after the DC/DC. LDOs have a high power supply rejection ratio (PSRR) at the lower frequency power save mode of most DC/DC converters, and effectively attenuate the ripple to extremely low levels. The low current consumption (I_Q) of the TPS7A10 maintains high efficiency, even at light loads below 1 mA. This enables a lower standby current for portable systems and a corresponding fewer number of battery recharge cycles. Adding a DC/DC in front of an LDO also achieves a higher efficiency at higher loads, which eliminates thermal considerations that arise when using just an LDO at these high currents.

Both the TPS62801 and TPS7A10 come in ultra-small wafer-chip-scale packages (WCSP) for smallest solution size. The TPS62801 switches at up to 4 MHz, which decreases the size of its output filter. An 0201-size output capacitor and 0402-size inductor make an effective filter in this design.

While such a DC/DC plus LDO solution offers high performance, a DC/DC-only or LDO-only solution may be more appropriate for certain systems. Systems that tolerate higher ripple, such as microcontrollers (MCUs), may not require the LDO. Lowest current systems, such as the smallest standalone sensors, may not benefit much from the higher efficiency of an added DC/DC and would benefit more from the size savings of using just the LDO. The relative performance of all three architectures is shown and compared later in this document.

1.1 Key System Specifications

Table 1. Key System Specifications

PARAMETER	SPECIFICATIONS
TIDA-01566 Circuit	
Input voltage range	2.6 V to 5.5 V
DC/DC output voltage	1.4 V
DC/DC output current	0 A to 1 A
LDO output voltage	1.2 V
LDO output current	0 mA to 300 mA
No load input current (3.6 V_{IN})	8 μ A
Efficiency (10-mA load, 3 V_{IN})	73%
Total RMS noise (10 Hz to 100 kHz, 300-mA load)	104.6 μ V
DC/DC Only Circuit	
Input voltage range	1.8 V to 5.5 V
DC/DC output voltage	1.2 V
DC/DC output current ($V_{IN} > 2.3$ V)	0 A to 1 A
No load input current (3.6 V_{IN})	2.5 μ A
Efficiency (10-mA load, 3 V_{IN})	84%
Total RMS noise (10 Hz to 100 kHz, 300-mA load)	241.9 μ V
LDO Only Circuit	
Input voltage range	2.6 V to 3.3 V
LDO output voltage	1.2 V
LDO output current	0 mA to 300 mA
No load input current (3 V_{IN})	6 μ A
Efficiency (10-mA load, 3 V_{IN})	40%
Total RMS noise (10 Hz to 100 kHz, 300-mA load)	104.3 μ V

2 System Overview

2.1 Block Diagram

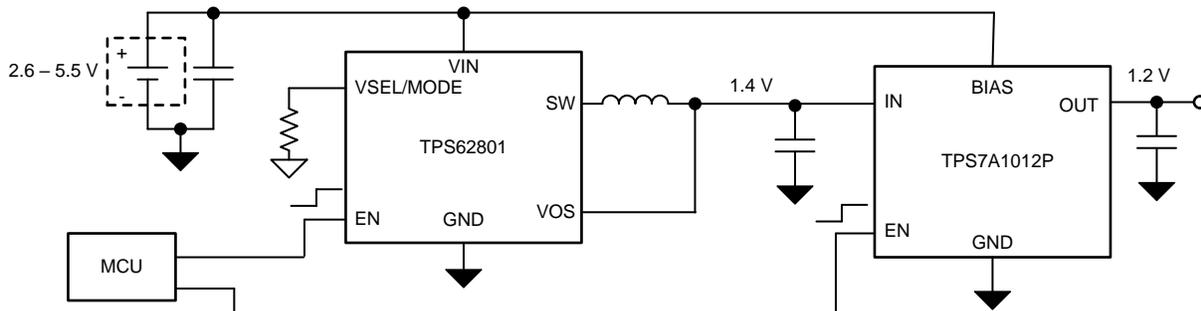


Figure 1. TIDA-01566 Block Diagram

2.2 Design Considerations

2.2.1 NMOS versus PMOS LDO

The choice of pass transistor type in the LDO determines the lowest possible input and output voltage. The TPS7A10 uses an NMOS pass transistor, optimized for the lowest output voltages, which provides lower dropout. For the TPS7A10, an external BIAS voltage is required to be at least 1.4 V above the 1.2-V output voltage. This sets the minimum input voltage of this reference design to 2.6 V.

Alternatively, an LDO with a PMOS pass transistor can be used for higher output voltages. For example, the TPS7A0518 supports a 1.8-V output voltage down to approximately $2.2 V_{IN}$.

2.2.2 Passive Component Selection

This reference design uses the smallest possible passive components (capacitors and inductors) available. This includes 0201-sized (0603 metric) capacitors and a 0402-sized (1005 metric) inductor to optimize the design for smallest size. Using larger passive components increases the total solution size, but also allows more available components to be chosen. Generally, a larger inductor provides higher efficiency, through its lower DC resistance, while larger capacitors reduce the ripple and noise through their higher effective capacitance.

2.3 Highlighted Products

2.3.1 TPS62801 DC/DC

The TPS62801 is a tiny, step-down DC/DC converter optimized for small size and high efficiency portable applications, such as wearables. Its 0.35-mm pitch WCSP package and 4-MHz switching frequency support the smallest size solutions. It delivers up to 1 A of output current with a non-switching quiescent current (I_Q) of just 2.3 μ A. The output voltage is adjustable through a single resistor, and a MODE pin is available for lowest noise requirements.

2.3.2 TPS7A10 LDO

The TPS7A10 is a family of low drop-out (LDO) linear regulators also optimized for small size and high efficiency applications. The TPS7A10 is packaged in a 0.4-mm pitch WCSP package. It delivers up to 300 mA of output current with an I_Q of just 6 μ A. It provides a BIAS pin, which is ideal for high efficiency, post-DC/DC low noise operation. The output voltage is chosen through the choice of the exact device part number.

3 Hardware and Test Results

3.1 Hardware and Schematic

The TIDA-01566 is built on a dedicated printed circuit board (PCB) and optimized for the smallest solution size. See [Figure 2](#) for the schematic. Jumpers are available for enabling the DC/DC (JP2) and LDO (JP3) independently, as well as selecting the higher efficiency pulse frequency modulation (PFM) mode or the lower noise pulse width modulation (PWM) mode for the DC/DC (JP1).

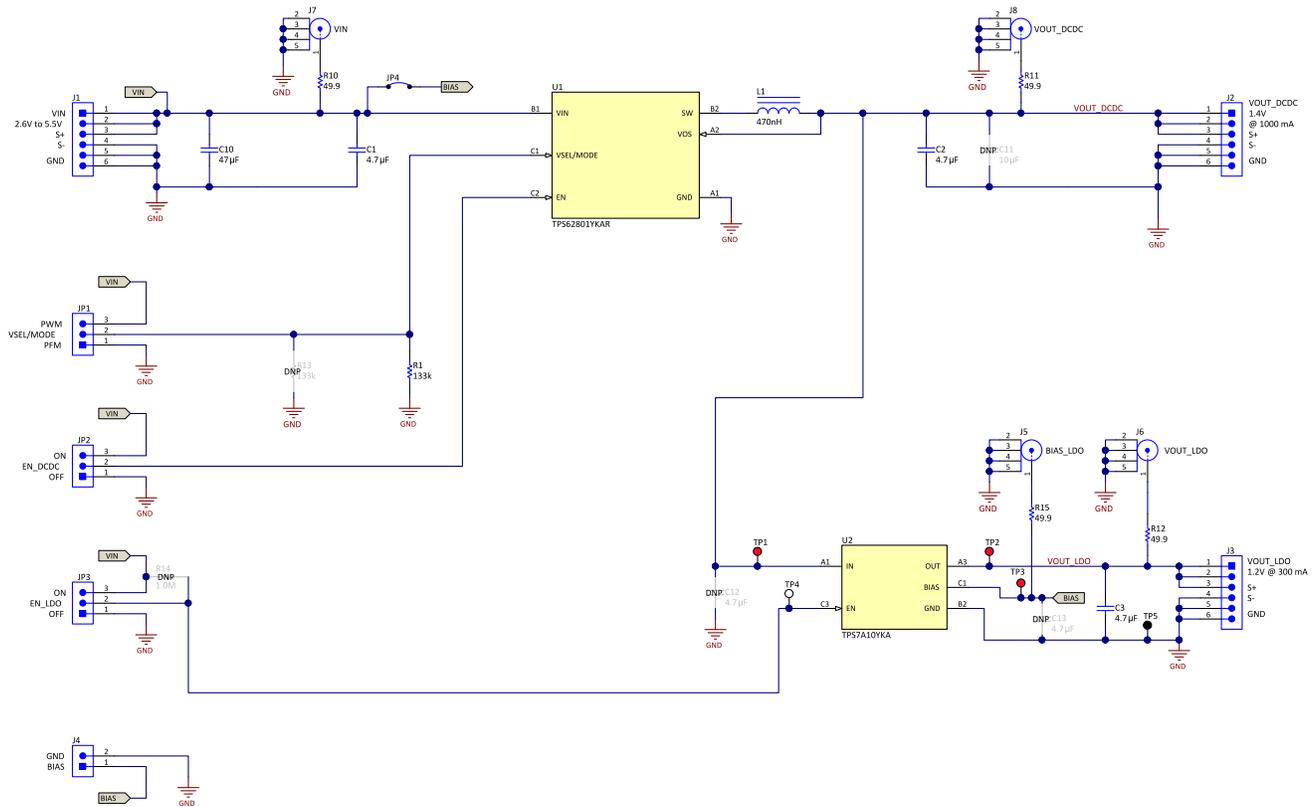


Figure 2. TIDA-01566 Schematic

3.2 Test Results

3.2.1 Test Setup

Three circuit configurations are measured and their performance presented: DC/DC + LDO (referred to as TIDA-01566), DC/DC only, and LDO only. The key performance data for each of the three circuits is compared at 3 V_{IN}, which each configuration supports.

3.2.2 Test Results

3.2.2.1 TIDA-01566 Circuit

Unless otherwise noted, this circuit configuration sets the DC/DC output voltage at 1.4 V and the LDO output voltage at 1.2 V.

3.2.2.1.1 Efficiency

Figure 3 shows the efficiency of the TIDA-01566 across various input voltages. The load is swept from 1 μA to 300 mA.

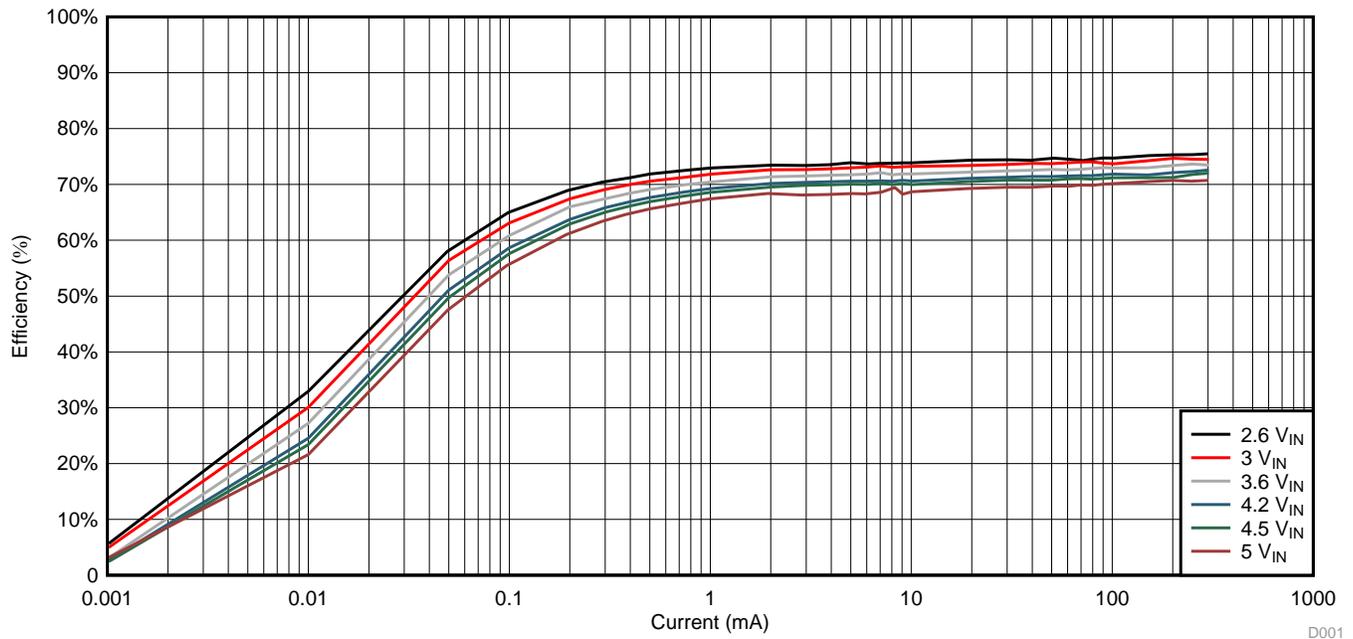


Figure 3. TIDA-01566 Efficiency

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3.2.2.1.2 Output Ripple

Figure 4, Figure 5, and Figure 6 show the output ripple of the TIDA-01566 with a 3-V input voltage. Figure 7, Figure 8, and Figure 9 show the output ripple of the TIDA-01566 with a 3.6-V input voltage.

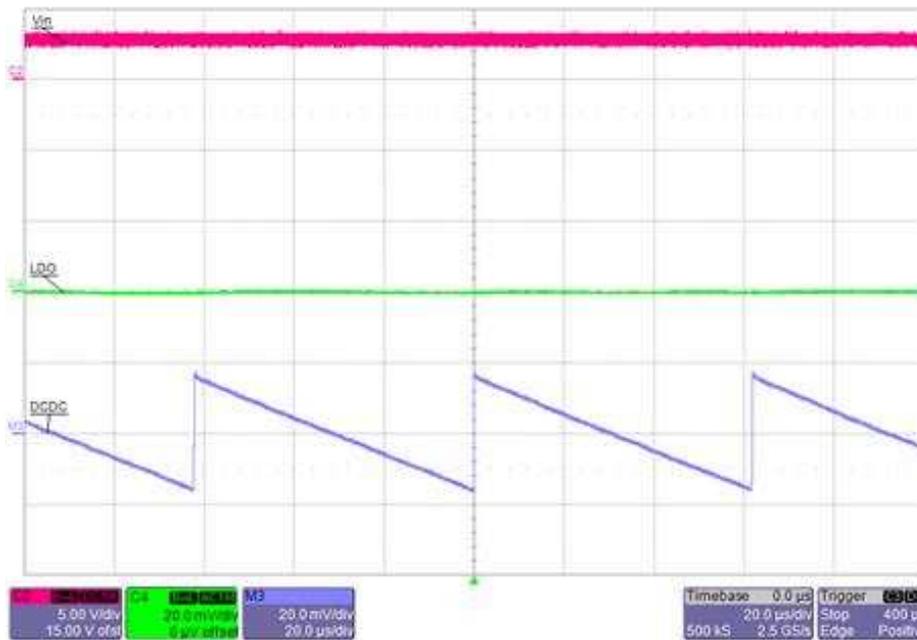


Figure 4. TIDA-01566 Output Ripple ($V_{in} = 3\text{ V}$, Load = 1 mA)

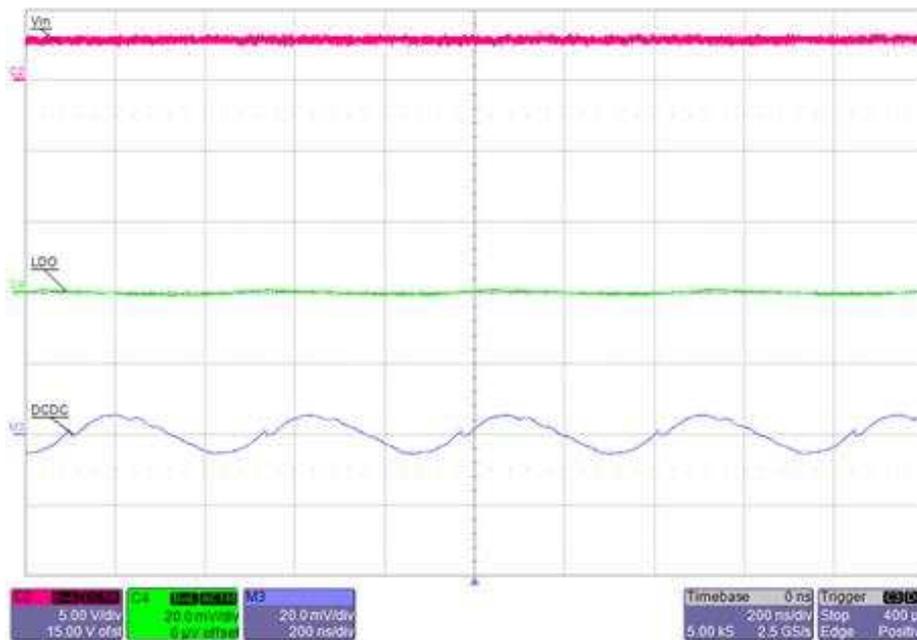


Figure 5. TIDA-01566 Output Ripple ($V_{in} = 3\text{ V}$, Load = 100 mA)

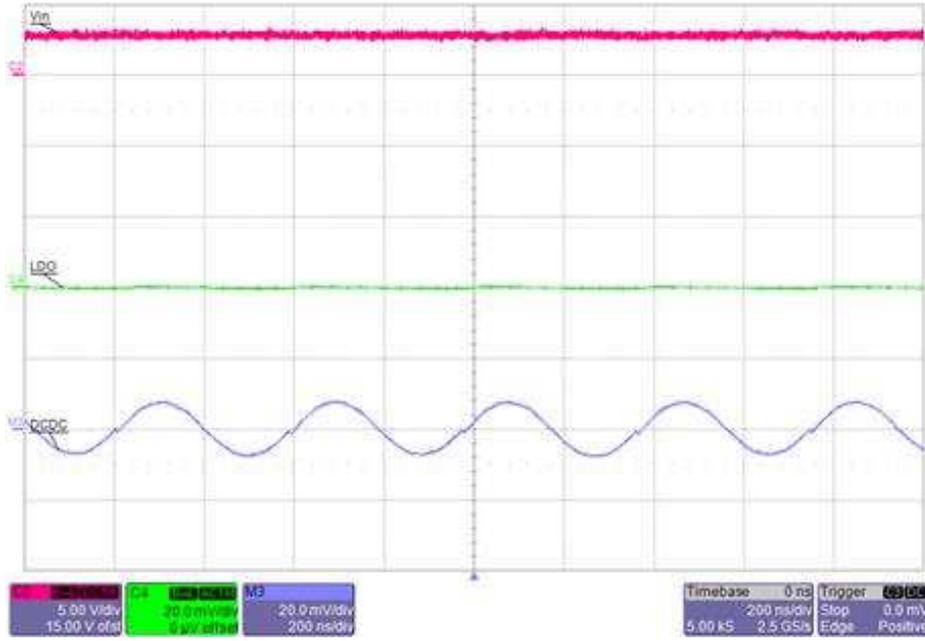


Figure 6. TIDA-01566 Output Ripple ($V_{in} = 3\text{ V}$, Load = 300 mA)



Figure 7. TIDA-01566 Output Ripple ($V_{in} = 3.6\text{ V}$, Load = 1 mA)

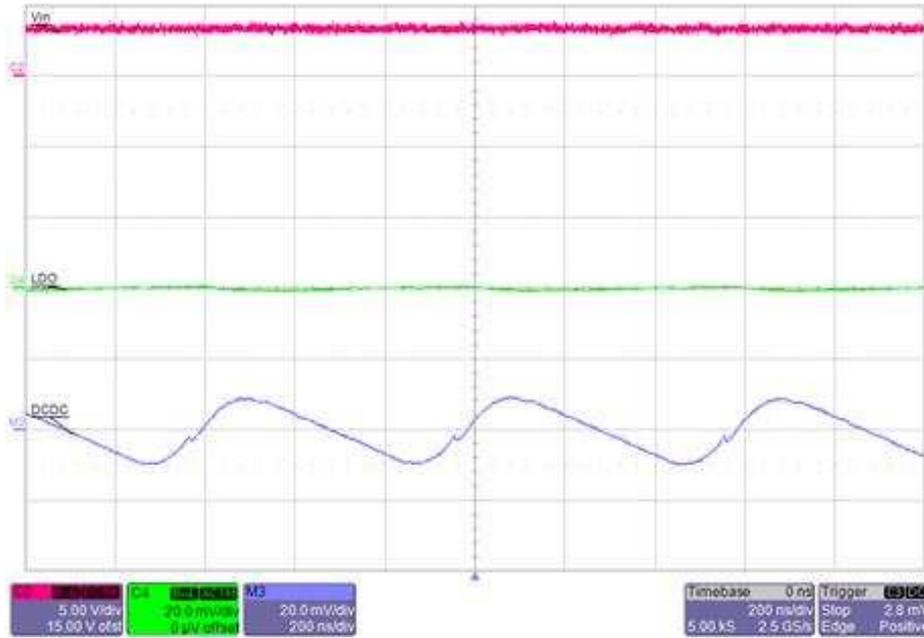


Figure 8. TIDA-01566 Output Ripple ($V_{in} = 3.6\text{ V}$, Load = 100 mA)

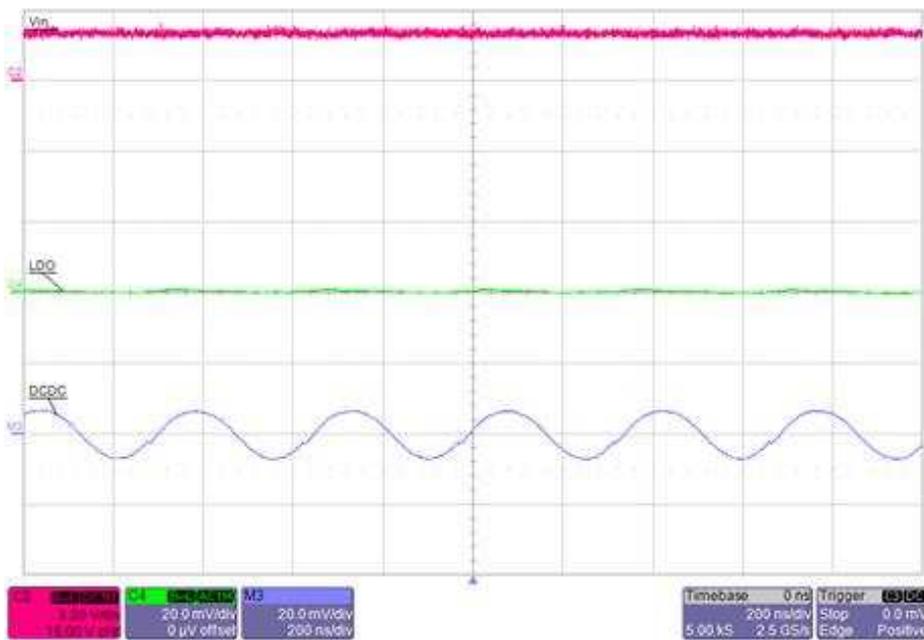


Figure 9. TIDA-01566 Output Ripple ($V_{in} = 3.6\text{ V}$, Load = 300 mA)

3.2.2.1.3 Noise Density

Figure 10 shows the noise density of the TIDA-01566 across multiple load currents.

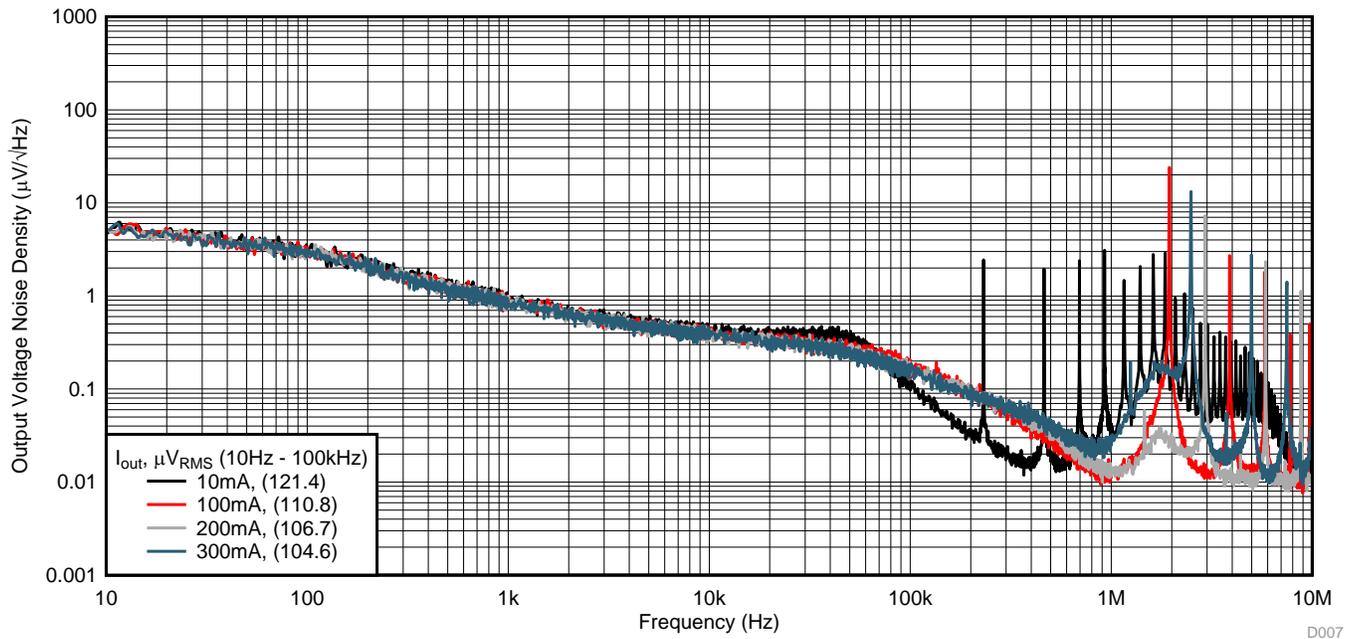


Figure 10. TIDA-01566 Noise Density ($V_{in} = 3\text{ V}$)

3.2.2.1.4 Transient Response

Figure 11 and Figure 12 show the transient response of the TIDA-01566 to a 10- μA to 50-mA load step and to a 1-mA to 200-mA load step, respectively, both with a 3-V input voltage and 1- μsec rise and fall times. Transient response does not change significantly with changes in input voltage.

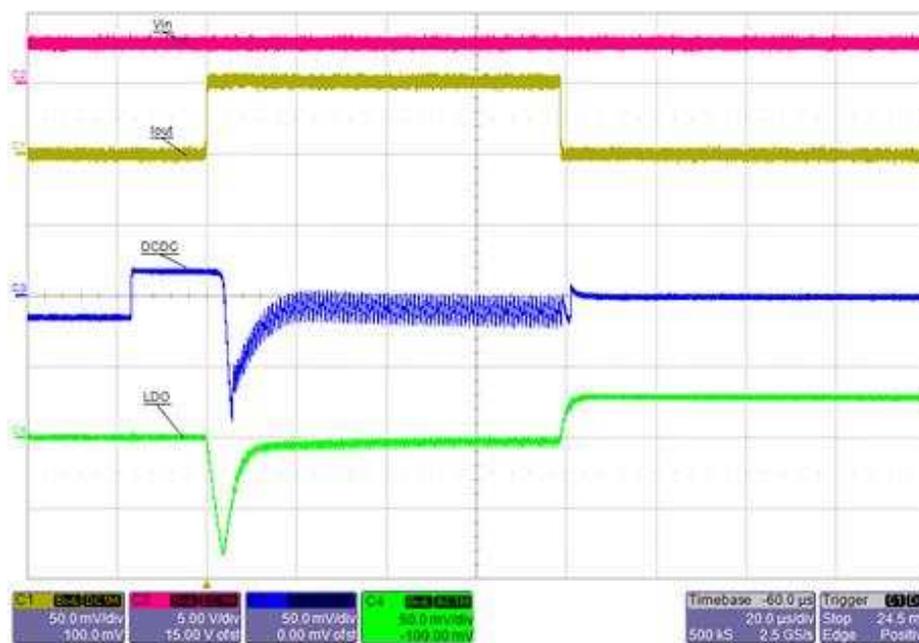


Figure 11. TIDA-01566 Load Transient Response ($V_{in} = 3\text{ V}$, 10- μA to 50-mA Load Step)

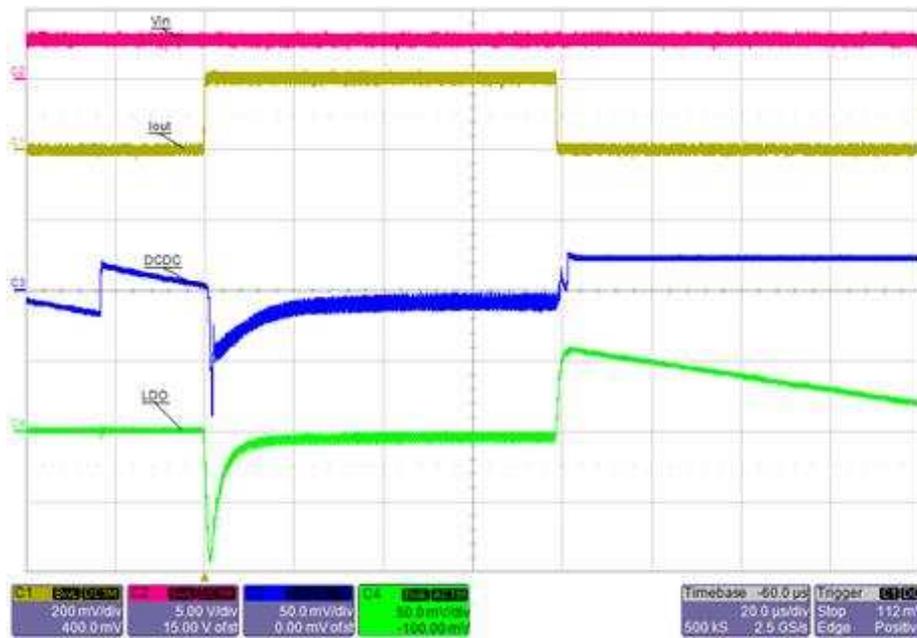


Figure 12. TIDA-01566 Load Transient Response ($V_{in} = 3\text{ V}$, 1-mA to 200-mA Load Step)

3.2.2.1.5 Thermal Performance

Figure 13 shows the thermal image of the TIDA-01566 with a 3-V input and 300-mA load current.

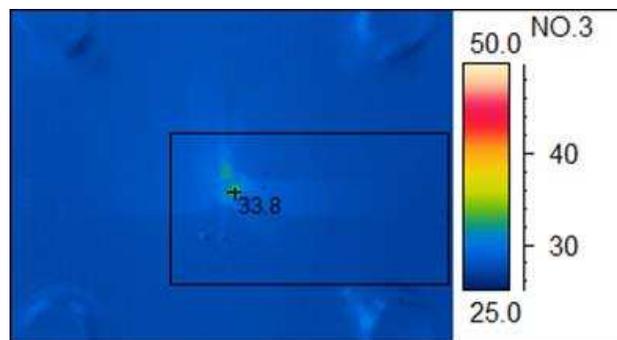


Figure 13. TIDA-01566 Thermal Performance ($V_{in} = 3\text{ V}$, Load = 300 mA)

3.2.2.1.6 Start-Up and Shutdown

Figure 14 shows the start-up and shutdown of the TIDA-01566 with a 3-V input and 0-A load current.

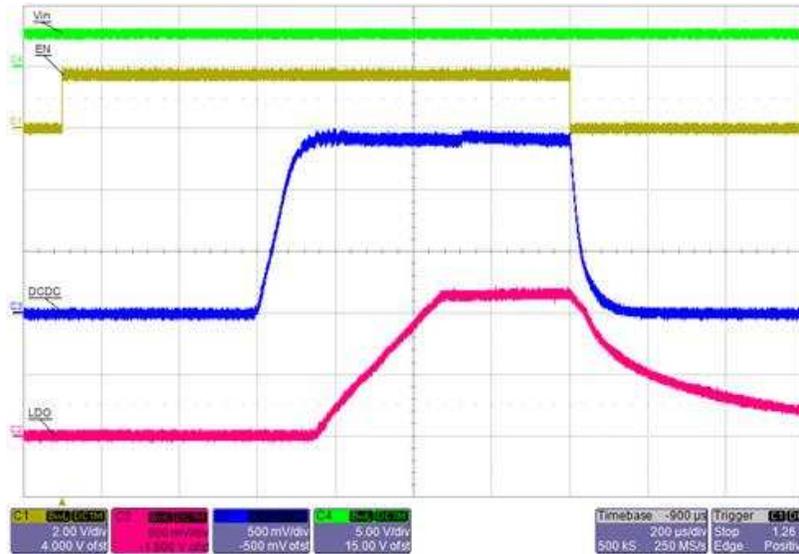


Figure 14. TIDA-01566 Start-Up and Shutdown ($V_{IN} = 3\text{ V}$, Load = 0 A)

3.2.2.2 TPS62801 (DC/DC) Circuit

This circuit configuration sets the DC/DC output voltage at 1.2 V, and does not use an LDO.

3.2.2.2.1 Efficiency

Figure 15 shows the efficiency of the TPS62801 across various input voltages. The load is swept from 1 μA to 1 A, with the exception of the forced PWM mode, which is swept from 1 mA to 1 A. Also, the load current is limited to 700 mA at a 1.8-V input voltage.

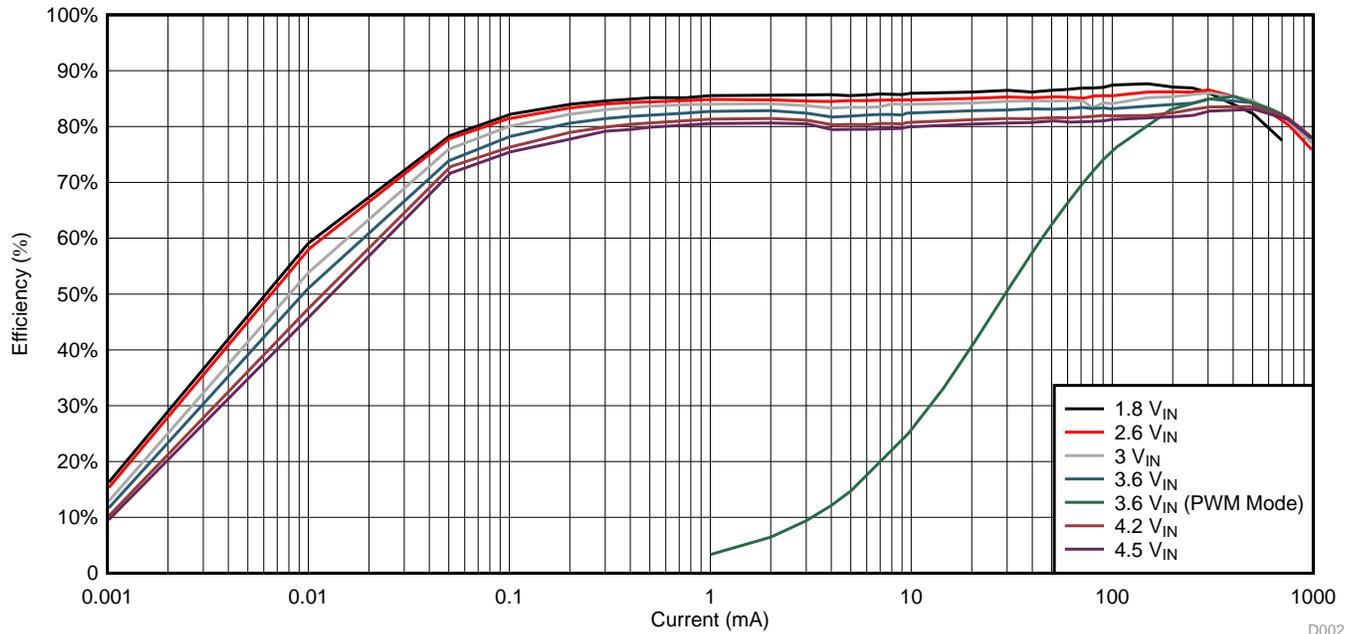


Figure 15. TPS62801 Efficiency

3.2.2.2.2 Output Ripple

Figure 16, Figure 17, and Figure 18 show the output ripple of the TPS62801 with a 3-V input voltage. Figure 19, Figure 20, and Figure 21 show the output ripple of the TPS62801 with a 3.6-V input voltage.



Figure 16. TPS62801 Output Ripple ($V_{IN} = 3\text{ V}$, Load = 1 mA)

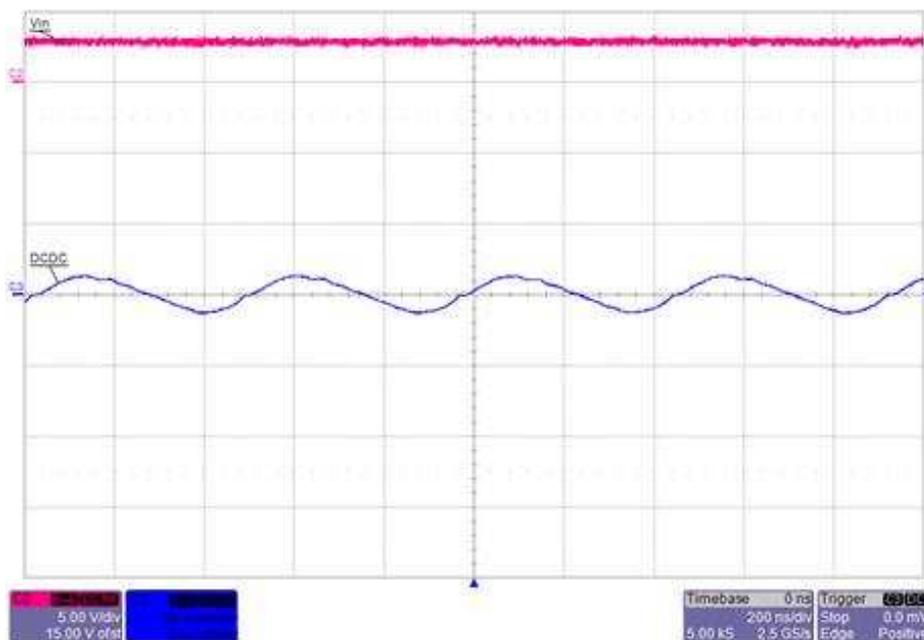


Figure 17. TPS62801 Output Ripple ($V_{IN} = 3\text{ V}$, Load = 100 mA)

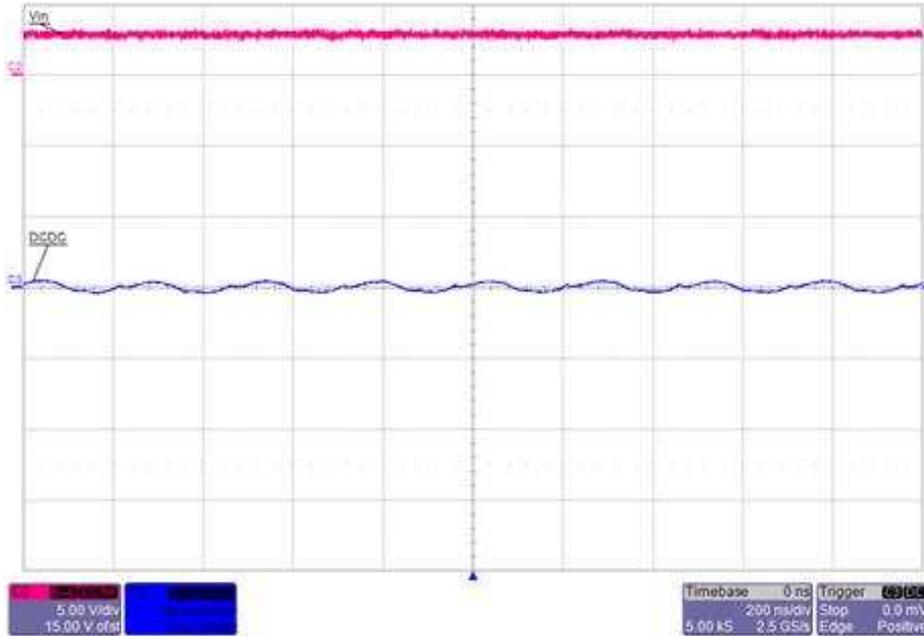


Figure 18. TPS62801 Output Ripple ($V_{IN} = 3\text{ V}$, Load = 300 mA)

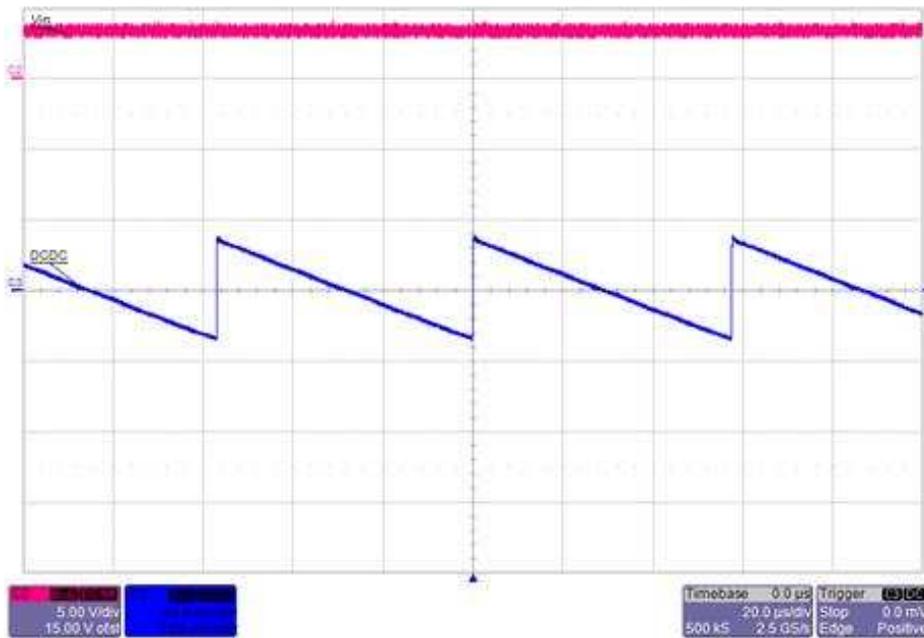


Figure 19. TPS62801 Output Ripple ($V_{IN} = 3.6\text{ V}$, Load = 1 mA)

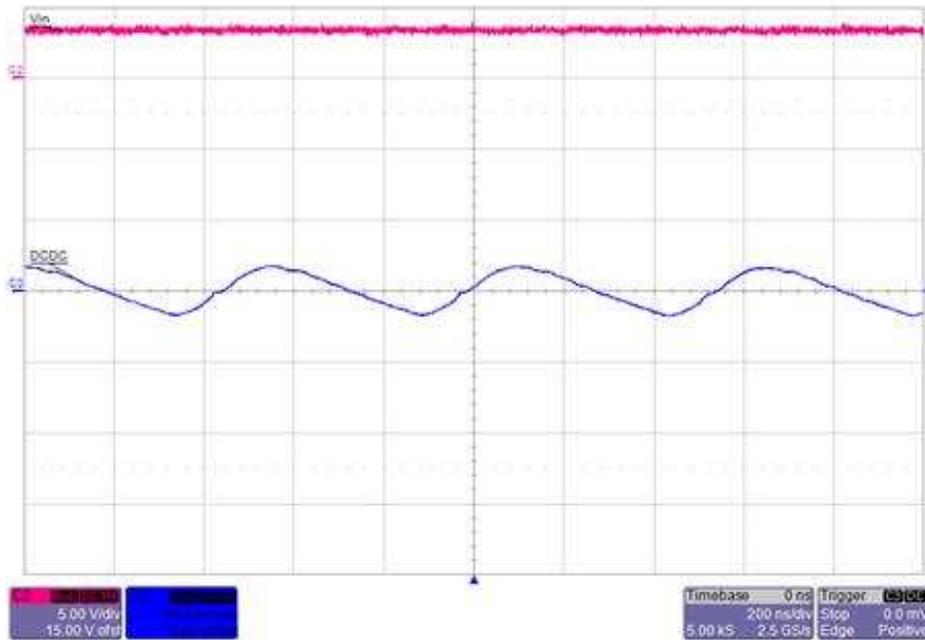


Figure 20. TPS62801 Output Ripple ($V_{IN} = 3.6\text{ V}$, Load = 100 mA)

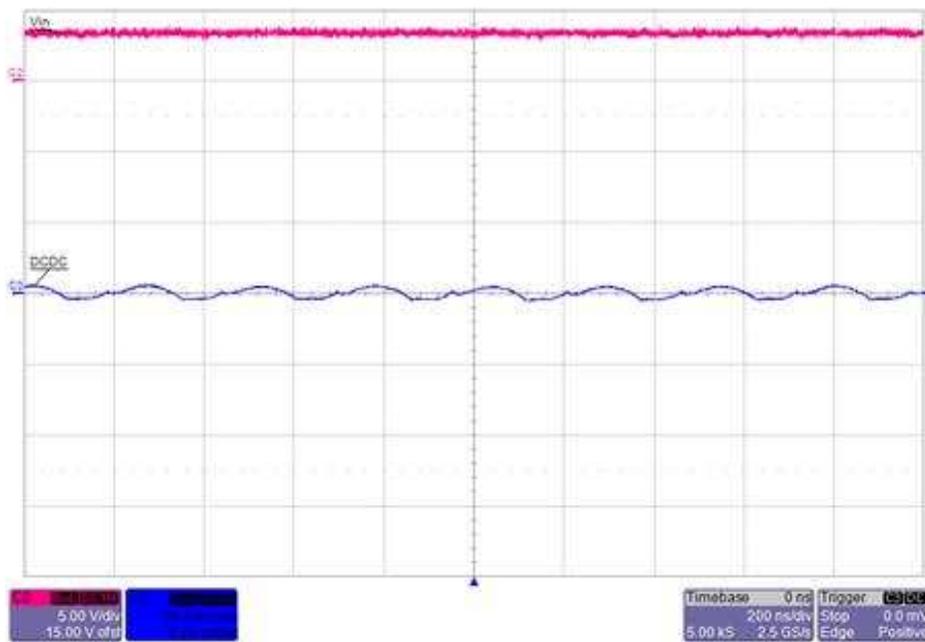


Figure 21. TPS62801 Output Ripple ($V_{IN} = 3.6\text{ V}$, Load = 300 mA)

3.2.2.2.3 Noise Density

Figure 31 shows the noise density of the TPS62801 across multiple load currents.

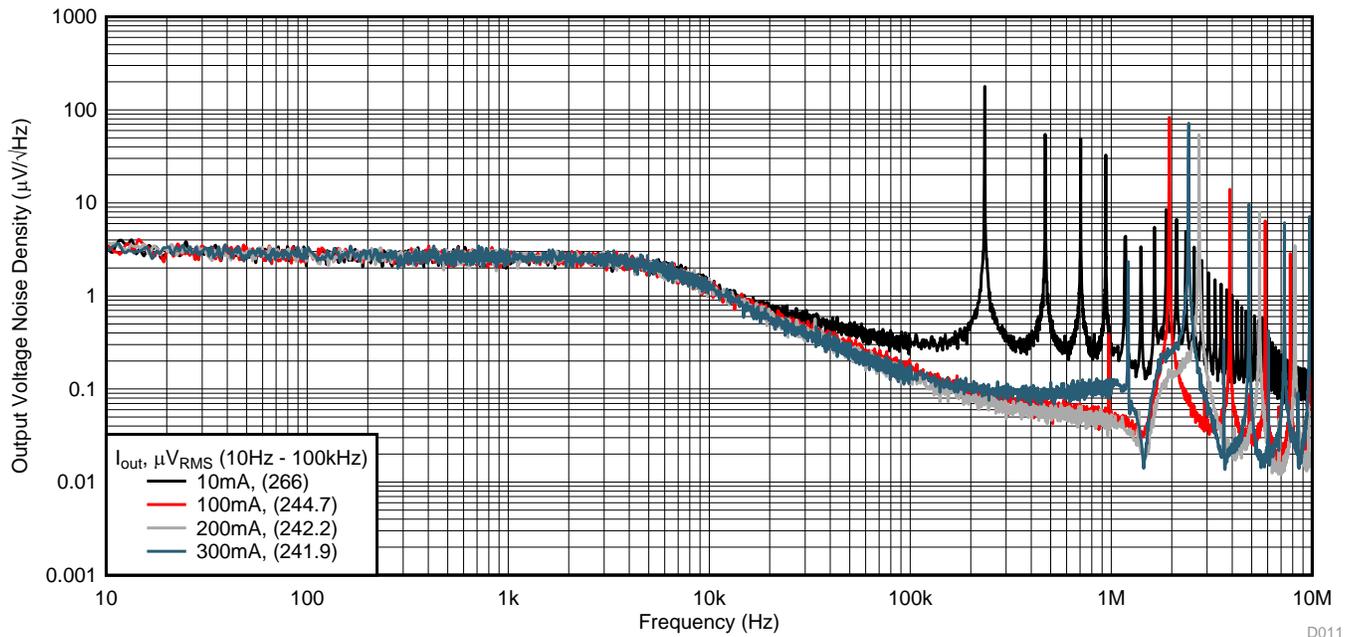


Figure 22. TPS62801 Noise Density ($V_{in} = 3\text{ V}$)

3.2.2.2.4 Transient Response

Figure 23 and Figure 24 show the transient response of the TPS62801 to a 10-µA to 50-mA load step and to a 1-mA to 200-mA load step, respectively, both with a 3-V input voltage and 1-µsec rise and fall times. Transient response does not change significantly with changes in input voltage.

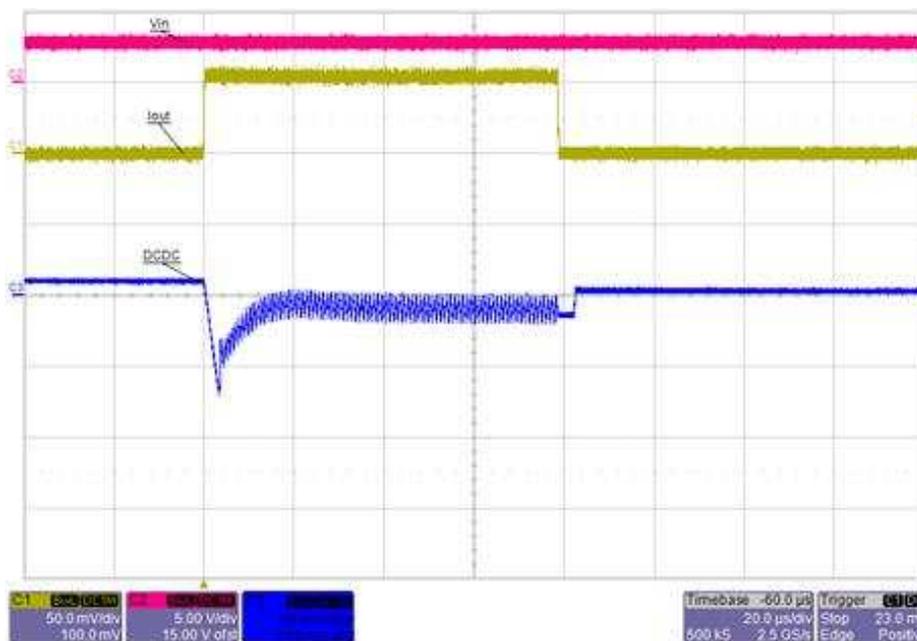


Figure 23. TPS62801 Load Transient Response ($V_{IN} = 3\text{ V}$, 10-µA to 50-mA Load Step)

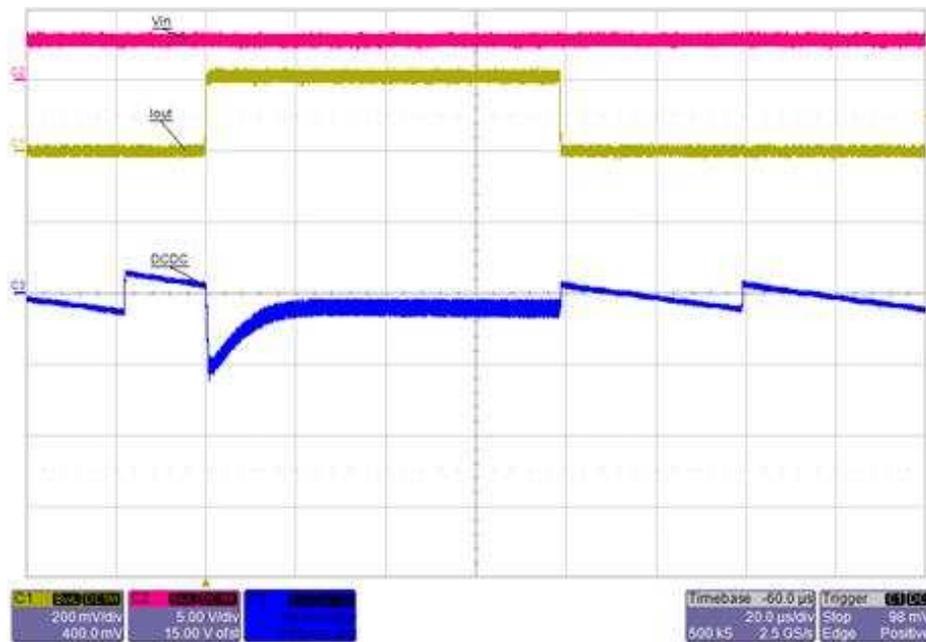


Figure 24. TPS62801 Load Transient Response ($V_{IN} = 3\text{ V}$, 1-mA to 200-mA Load Step)

3.2.2.2.5 Thermal Performance

Figure 25 shows the thermal image of the TPS62801 with a 3-V input and 300-mA load current.

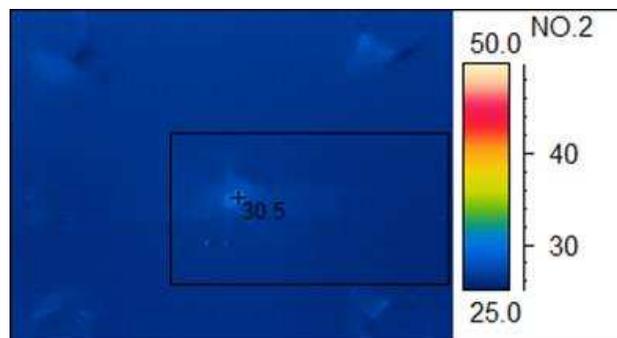


Figure 25. TPS62801 Thermal Performance ($V_{IN} = 3\text{ V}$, Load = 300 mA)

3.2.2.2.6 Start-Up and Shutdown

Figure 26 shows the start-up and shutdown of the TPS62801 with a 3-V input and 0-A load current.

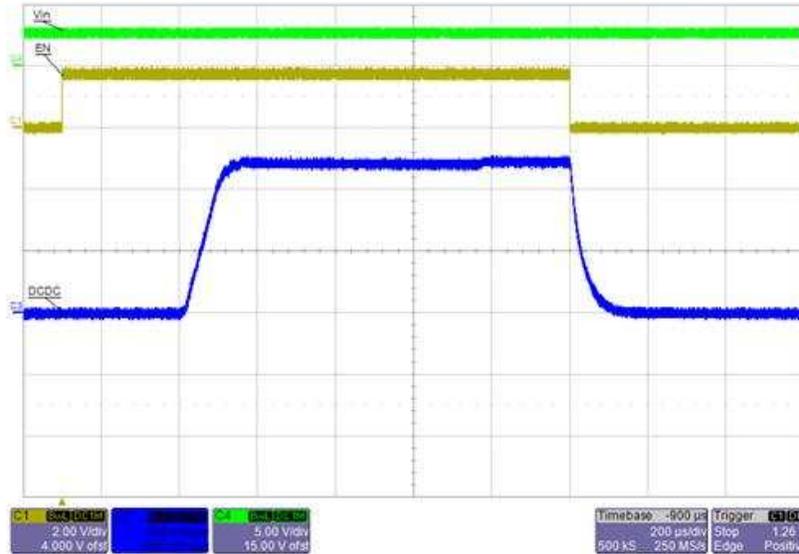


Figure 26. TPS62801 Start-Up and Shutdown ($V_{IN} = 3\text{ V}$, Load = 0 A)

3.2.2.3 TPS7A10 (LDO) Circuit

This circuit configuration sets the LDO output voltage at 1.2 V, and does not use a DC/DC.

3.2.2.3.1 Efficiency

Figure 27 shows the efficiency of the TPS7A10 with a 3-V input. The load is swept from 1 μA to 300 mA.

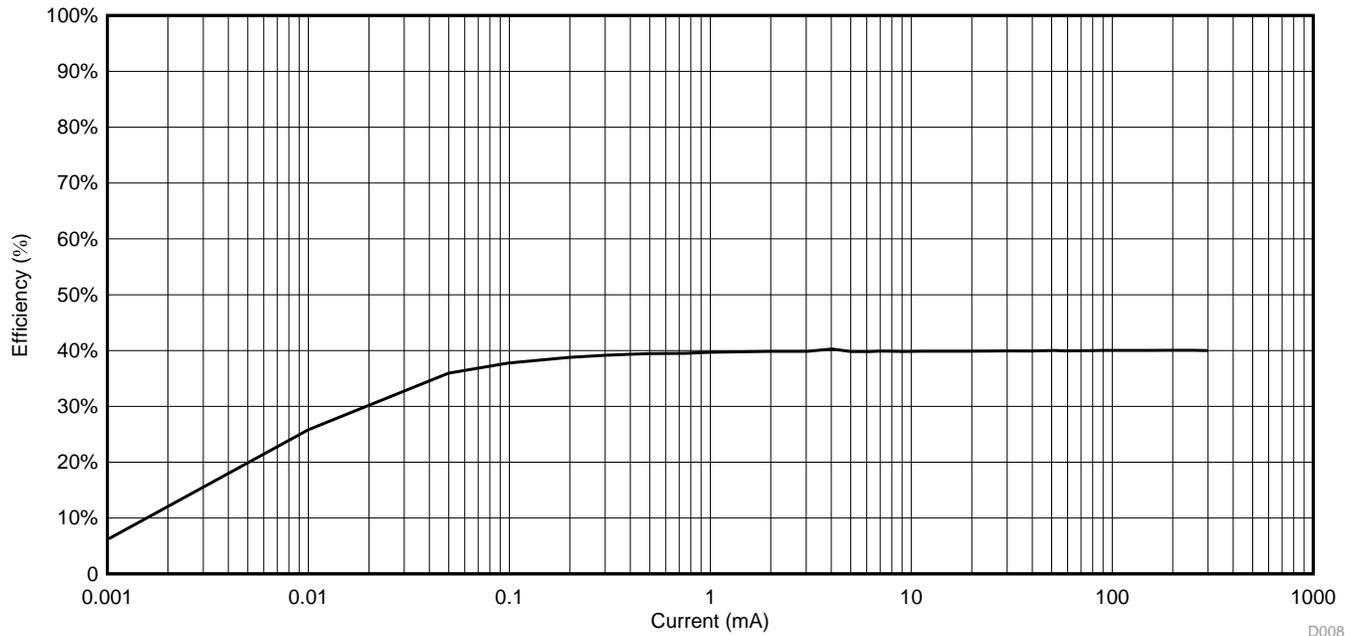


Figure 27. TPS7A10 Efficiency at $V_{IN} = 3\text{ V}$

3.2.2.3.2 Output Ripple

Figure 28, Figure 29, and Figure 30 show the output ripple of the TPS7A10 with a 3-V input voltage.

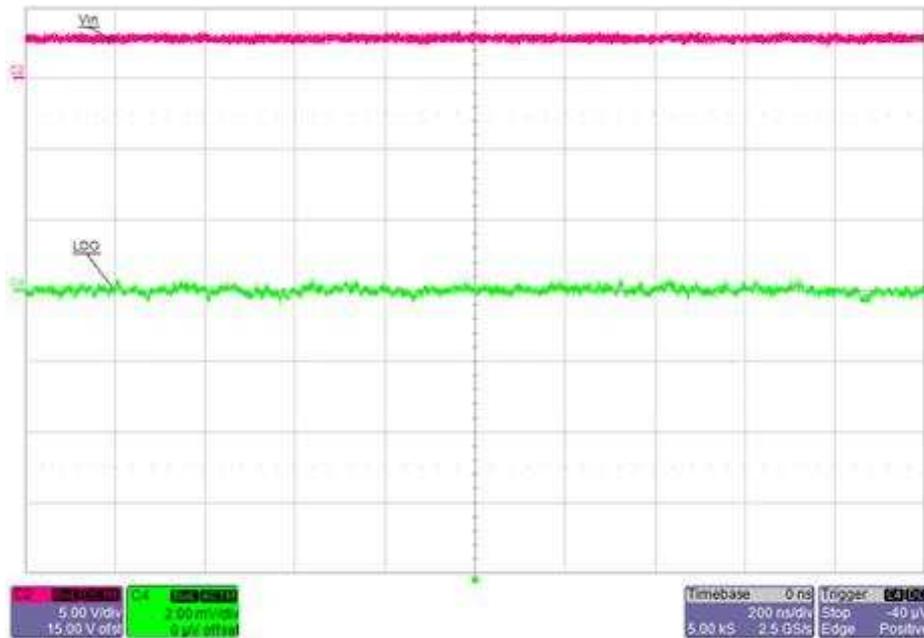


Figure 28. TPS7A10 Output Ripple ($V_{IN} = 3\text{ V}$, Load = 1 mA)

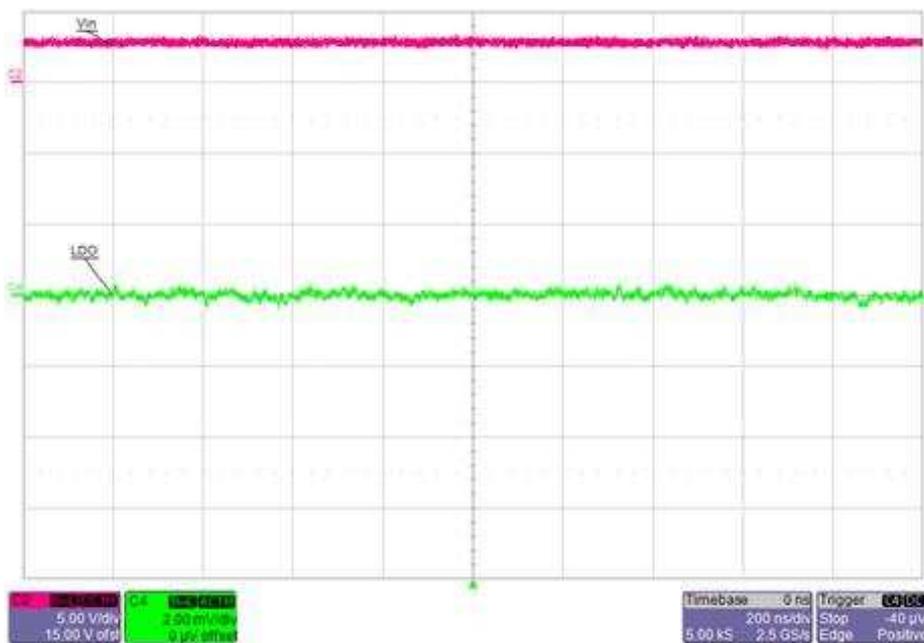


Figure 29. TPS7A10 Output Ripple ($V_{IN} = 3\text{ V}$, Load = 100 mA)

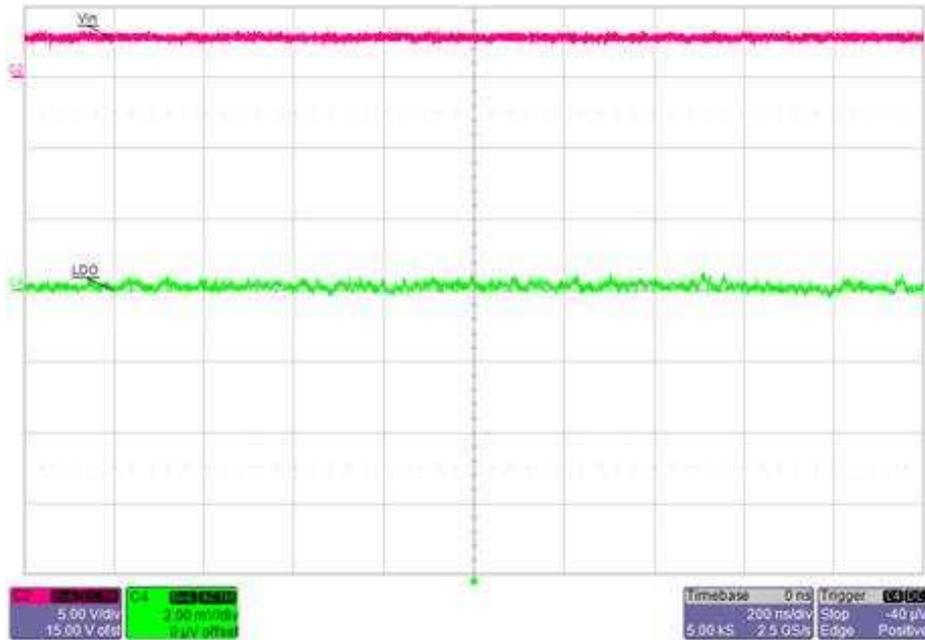


Figure 30. TPS7A10 Output Ripple ($V_{IN} = 3\text{ V}$, Load = 300 mA)

3.2.2.3.3 Noise Density

Figure 31 shows the noise density of the TPS7A10 across multiple load currents.

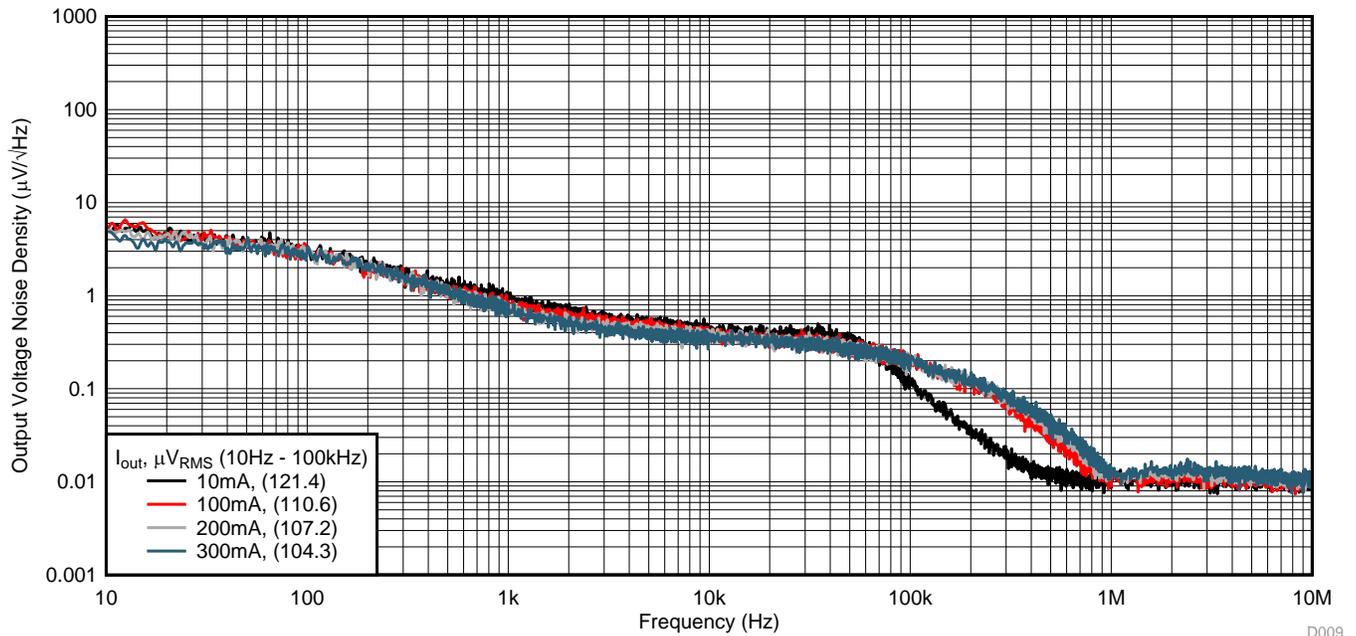


Figure 31. TPS7A10 Noise Density ($V_{in} = 3\text{ V}$)

3.2.2.3.4 Transient Response

Figure 32 and Figure 33 show the transient response of the TPS7A10 to a 10- μ A to 50-mA load step and to a 1-mA to 200- mA load step, respectively, both with a 3-V input voltage and 1- μ sec rise and fall times. Transient response does not change significantly with changes in input voltage.

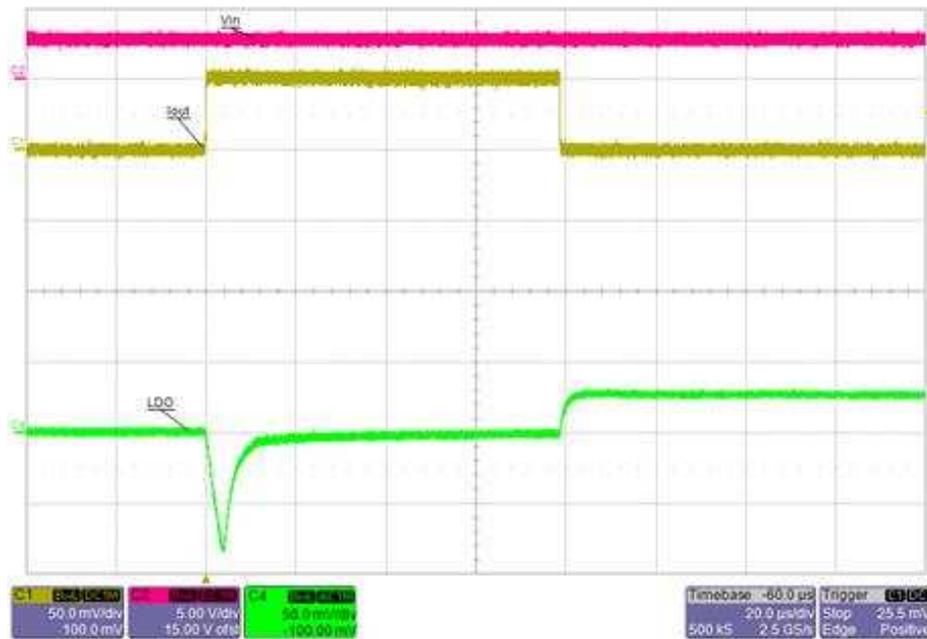


Figure 32. TPS7A10 Load Transient Response ($V_{IN} = 3$ V, 10- μ A to 50-mA Load Step)



Figure 33. TPS7A10 Load Transient Response ($V_{IN} = 3$ V, 1-mA to 200-mA Load Step)

3.2.2.3.5 Thermal Performance

Figure 34 shows the thermal image of the TPS7A10 with a 3-V input and 300-mA load current.

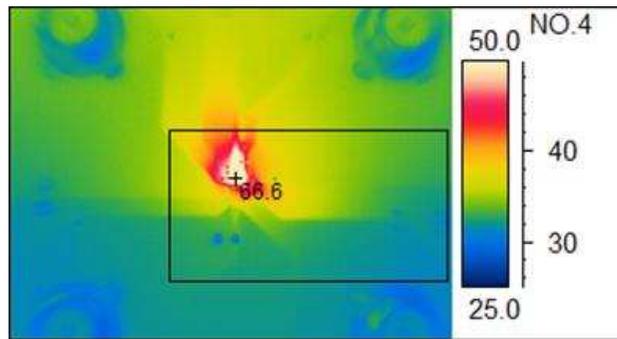


Figure 34. TPS7A10 Thermal Performance ($V_{IN} = 3\text{ V}$, Load = 300 mA)

3.2.2.3.6 Start-Up and Shutdown

Figure 35 shows the start-up and shutdown of the TPS7A10 with a 3-V input and 0-A load current.



Figure 35. TPS7A10 Start-Up and Shutdown ($V_{IN} = 3\text{ V}$, Load = 0 A)

3.2.2.4 Circuit Comparison

This section compares the performance of each of the previous three configurations at a V_{IN} of 3 V.

3.2.2.4.1 Efficiency

Figure 36 shows the efficiency of the TIDA-01566 compared to the TPS62801 DC/DC converter and the TPS7A10 LDO, with a 3-V input voltage.

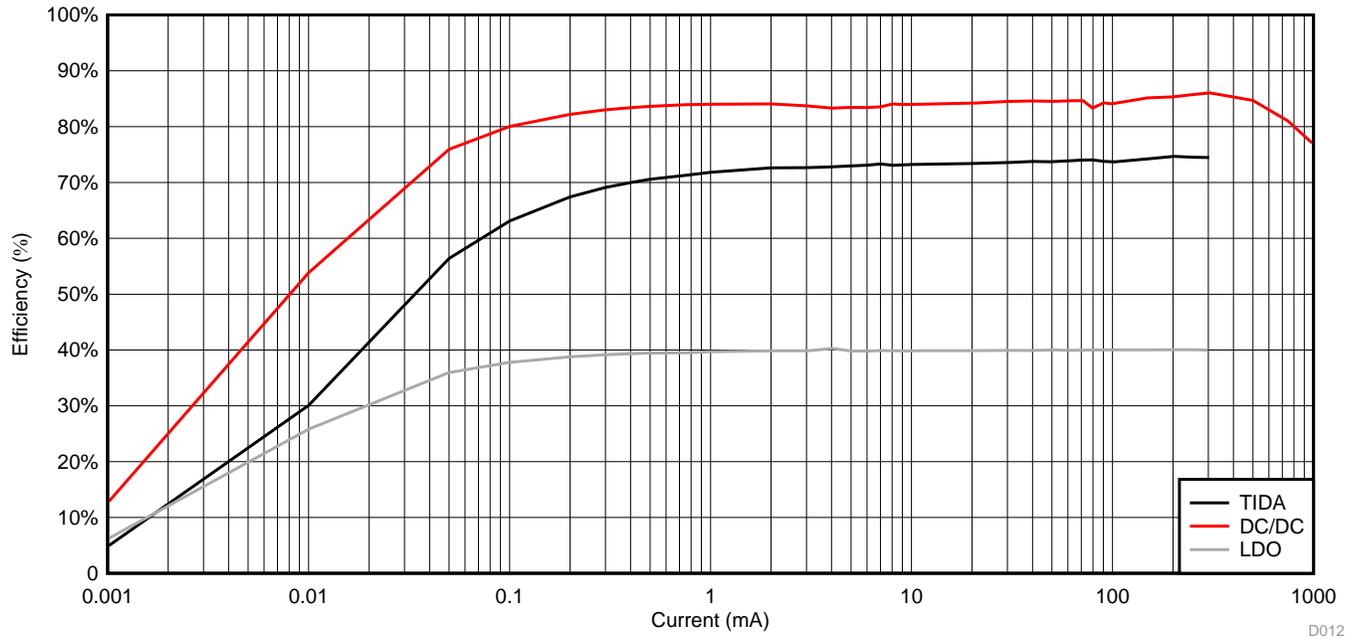


Figure 36. Efficiency Comparison ($V_{IN} = 3\text{ V}$)

3.2.2.4.2 Switching Quiescent Current (No-Load Input Current)

Figure 37 compares the no-load input current of each design over input voltage.

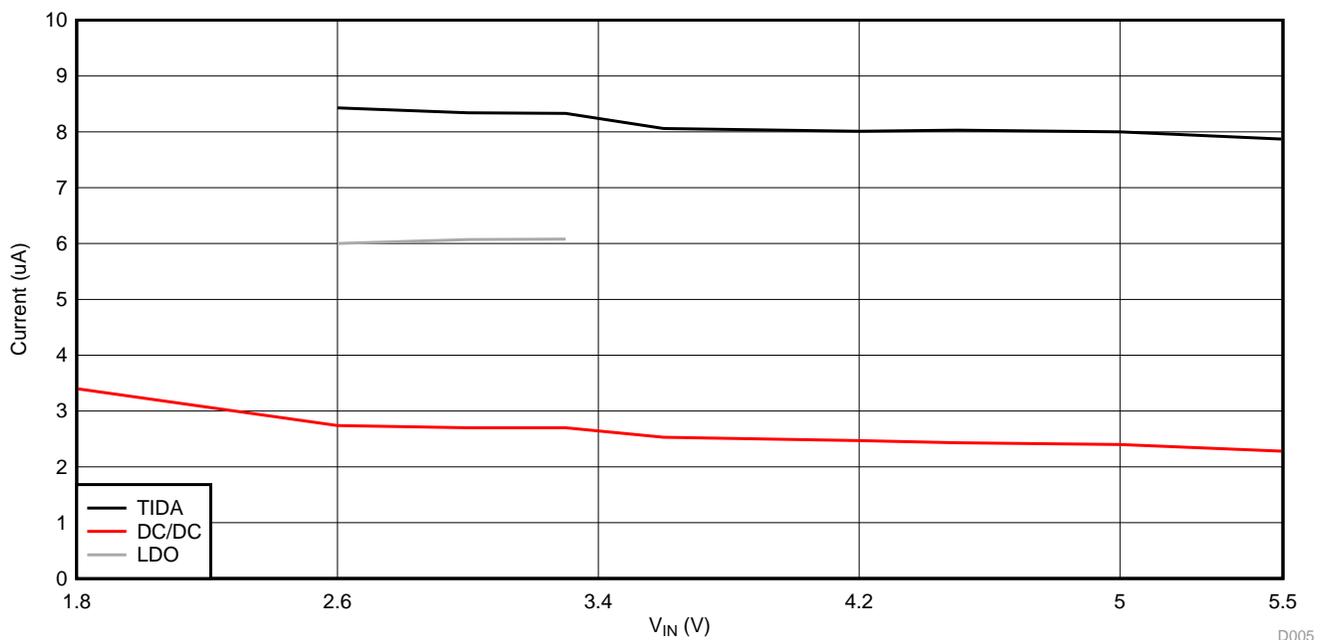


Figure 37. Switching Quiescent Current Comparison

3.2.2.4.3 Load Regulation

Figure 38 compares the load regulation of each design with a 3-V input voltage. The DC/DC has a higher output voltage at lower load currents, because the increased output voltage ripple averages up the DC output voltage.

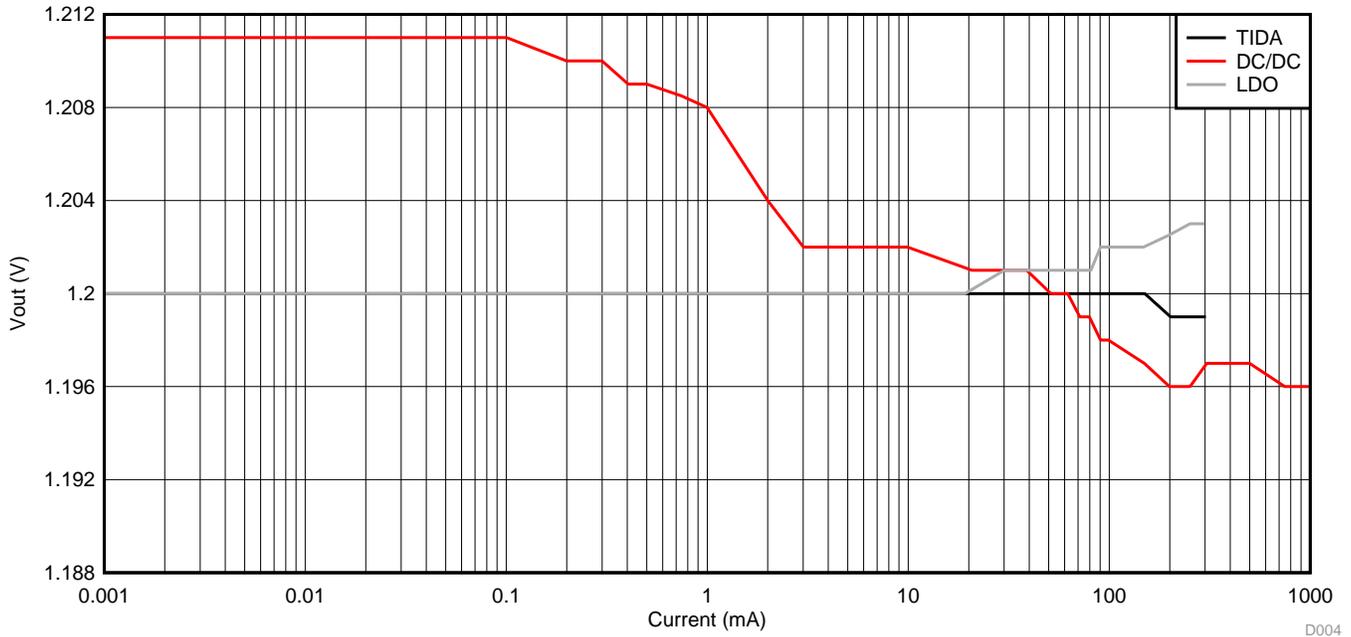


Figure 38. Load Regulation Comparison

3.2.2.4.4 Line Regulation

Figure 39 compares the line regulation of each design at both 100- μ A and 300-mA load currents. The DC/DC has a higher output voltage at lower load currents, because the increased output voltage ripple averages up the DC output voltage.

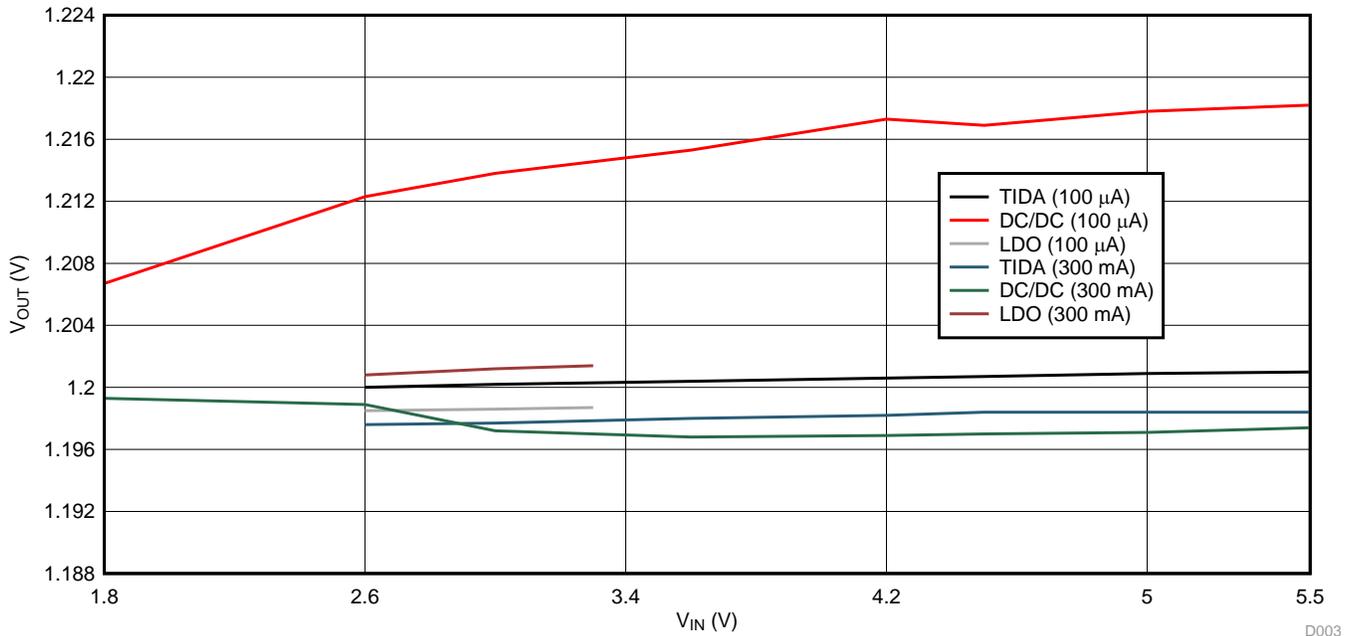


Figure 39. Line Regulation Comparison

3.2.2.4.5 Output Ripple

Table 2 compares the output ripple of the TIDA-01566 to the TPS62801 DC/DC converter and the TPS7A10 LDO at different load currents, with a 3-V input voltage. The output voltage ripple waveforms are shown in the preceding sections.

Table 2. Output Ripple Comparison

	1 mA	100 mA	300 mA
TIDA-01566	< 1 mV	< 1 mV	< 1 mV
TPS62801	25 mV	10 mV	3 mV
TPS7A10	< 1 mV	< 1 mV	< 1 mV

3.2.2.4.6 Noise Density

Figure 40 compares the noise density of each design with a 10 mA load. The LDO reduces the noise of the DC/DC by its PSRR.

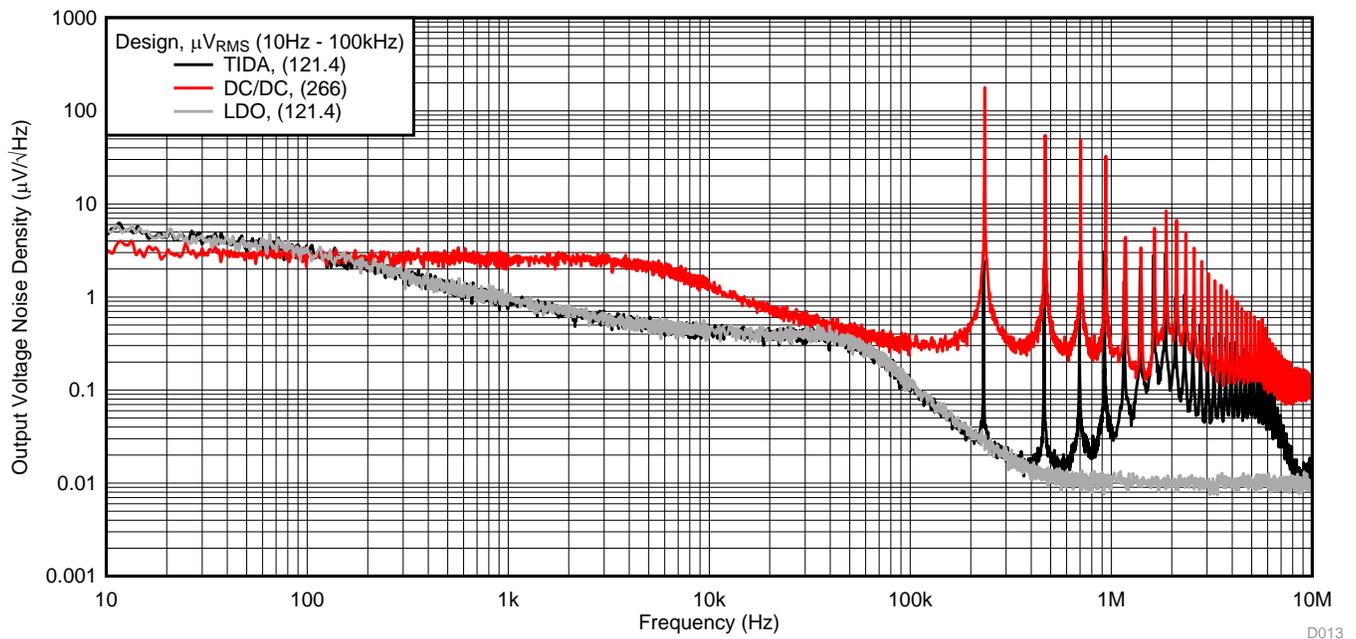


Figure 40. Noise Density Comparison ($V_{in} = 3\text{ V}$, Load = 10 mA)

3.2.2.4.7 Spurious Noise

Figure 41, Figure 42, and Figure 43 show the spurious noise of each design at 10 mA, 100 mA, and 300 mA, respectively. The LDO reduces the noise of the DC/DC by its PSRR.

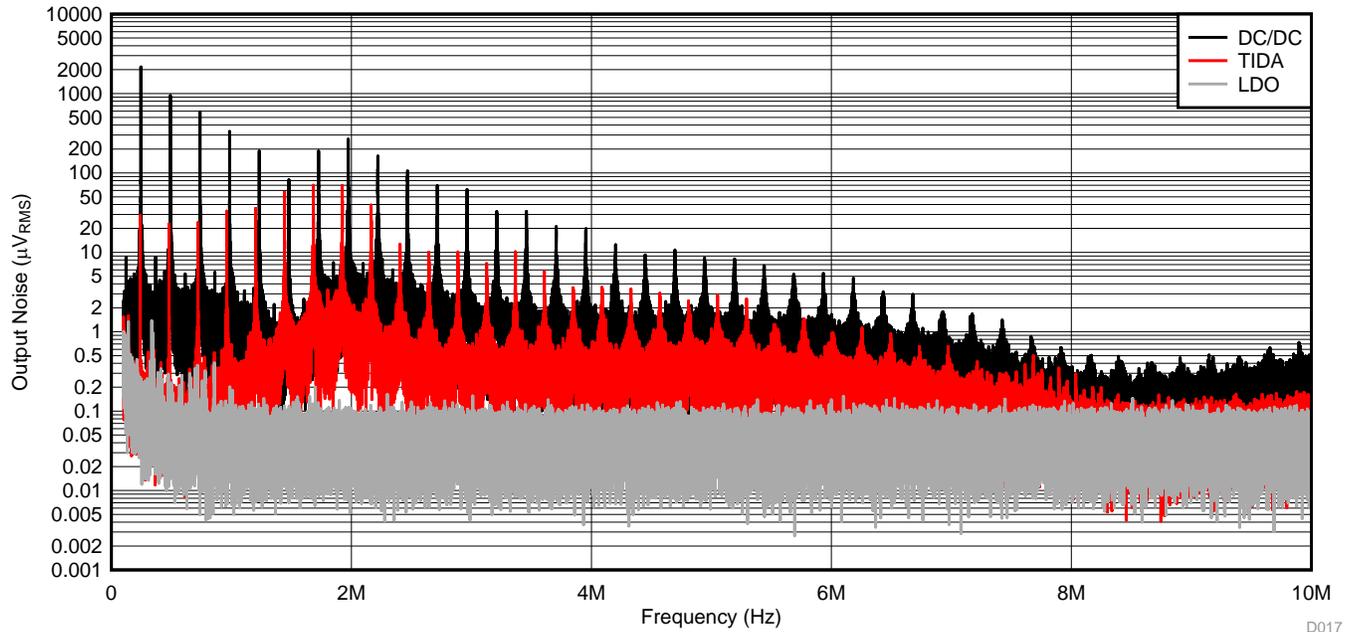


Figure 41. Spurious Noise Comparison ($V_{in} = 3\text{ V}$, Load = 10 mA)

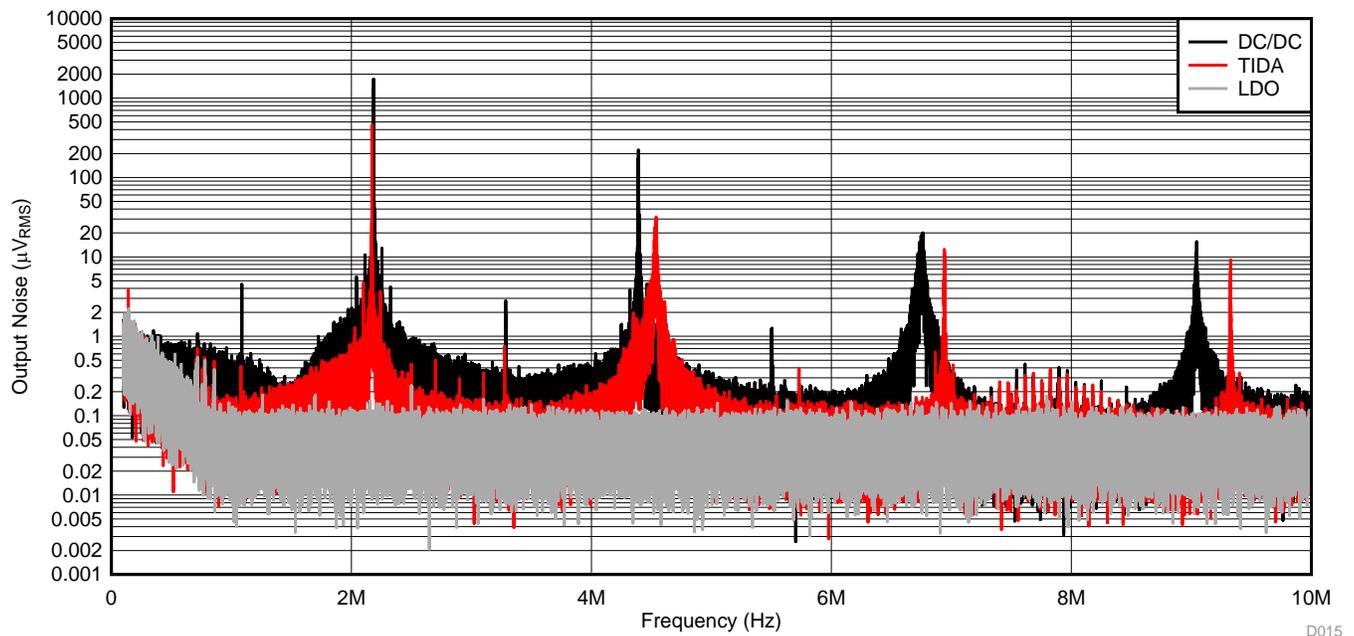


Figure 42. Spurious Noise Comparison ($V_{in} = 3\text{ V}$, Load = 100 mA)

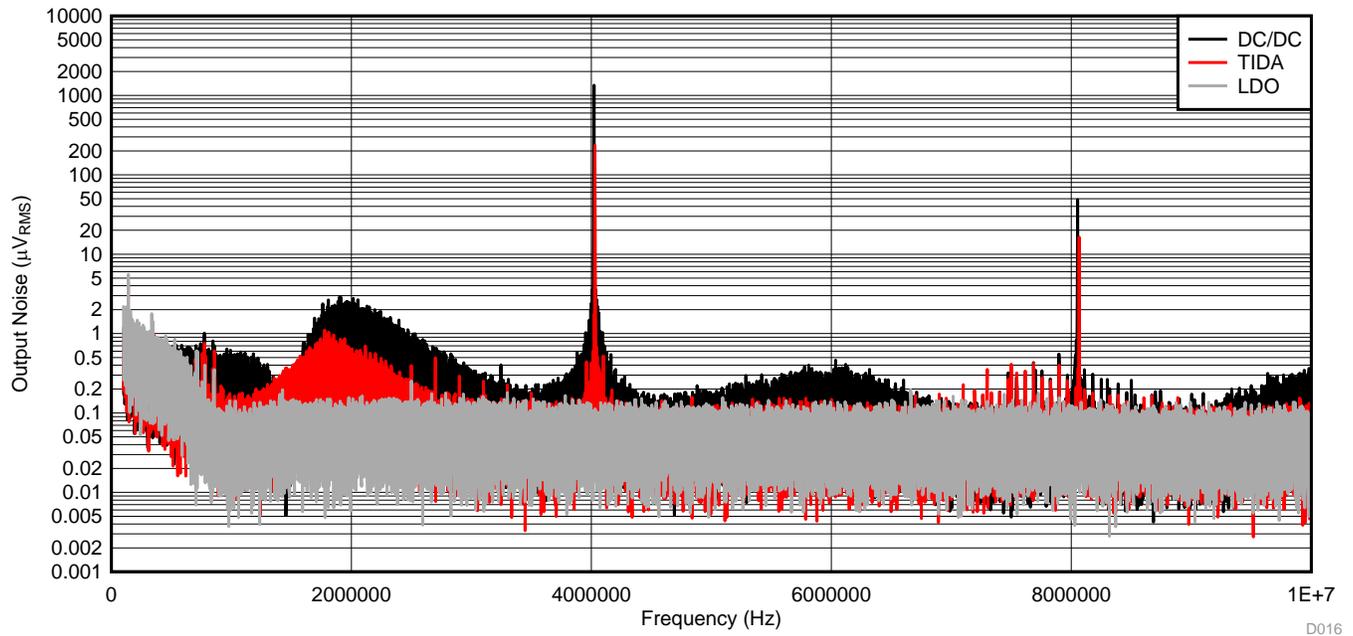


Figure 43. Spurious Noise Comparison ($V_{in} = 3\text{ V}$, Load = 300 mA)

3.2.2.4.8 Transient Response

Table 3 compares the transient response of the TIDA-01566 to the TPS62801 DC/DC converter and the TPS7A10 LDO, with a 3-V input voltage and 1- μ sec rise and fall times. Transient response does not change significantly with changes in input voltage.

Table 3. Transient response Comparison

	Transient Response: 10- μ A to 50-mA Step		Transient Response: 1-mA to 200-mA Step	
	Rising Load	Falling Load	Rising Load	Falling Load
TIDA-01566	81 mV	31 mV	91 mV	61 mV
TPS62801	76 mV	23 mV	65 mV	21 mV
TPS7A10	84 mV	28 mV	94 mV	52 mV

3.2.2.4.9 Thermal Performance

Table 4 compares the thermal performance of the TIDA-01566 to the TPS62801 DC/DC converter and the TPS7A10 LDO. Each design is run with a 3-V input and 300-mA load current for 20 minutes.

Table 4. Thermal Performance Comparison

	Temperature ($^{\circ}$ C)
TIDA-01566	33.8
TPS62801	30.5
TPS7A10	66.6

3.2.2.4.10 Solution Size

The solution sizes for the TIDA-01566, TPS62801 DC/DC converter, and the TPS7A10 LDO are shown in the list below. These solution sizes include the passive components required for each circuit. The TPS7A10 shares two capacitors that are included in the TPS62801's solution size and not included in the TPS7A10's solution size. These two capacitors are shaded by both red and blue in Figure 44. The resistor used to set the TPS62801's output voltage is shaded in a hatched red color, because it is not required for certain TPS6280x device versions which support the desired output voltage without this resistor at the VSEL/MODE pin. Figure 44 shows a picture of the physical circuit with measurements.

- TIDA-01566: 8.5 mm²
- TPS62801: 5.5 mm²
- TPS7A10: 3 mm²

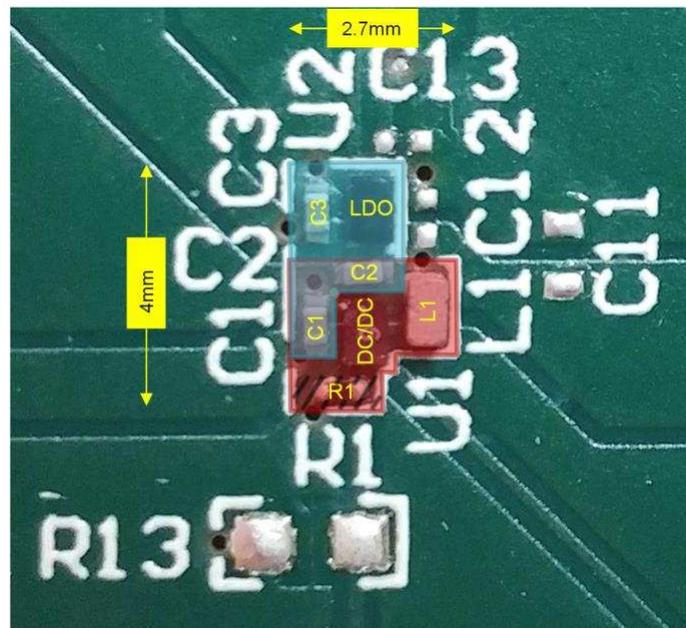


Figure 44. TIDA-01566 Solution Size

4 Design Files

4.1 Schematics

To download the schematics, see the design files at [TIDA-01566](#).

4.2 Bill of Materials

To download the bill of materials (BOM), see the design files at [TIDA-01566](#).

4.3 PCB Layout Recommendations

4.3.1 Layout Prints

To download the layer plots, see the design files at [TIDA-01566](#).

4.4 Gerber Files

To download the Gerber files, see the design files at [TIDA-01566](#).

4.5 Assembly Drawings

To download the assembly drawings, see the design files at [TIDA-01566](#).

5 Related Documentation

1. Texas Instruments, [TPS6280x 1.8-V to 5.5-V, 1-A, 2.3- \$\mu\$ A \$I_Q\$ Step Down Converter in a 6-Pin, 0.35-mm Pitch WCSP Package Data Sheet](#)
2. Texas Instruments, [TPS7A10 300-mA, Low-VIN, Low-VOUT, Ultra-Low-Dropout Regulator Data Sheet](#)
3. Texas Instruments, [TPS7A05 1- \$\mu\$ A \$I_Q\$, 200-mA, Ultralow \$I_Q\$ LDO in a 1-mm x 1-mm Package Data Sheet](#)
4. Texas Instruments, [Accurately measuring efficiency of ultralow- \$I_Q\$ devices Technical Brief](#)
5. Texas Instruments, [Performing Accurate PFM Mode Efficiency Measurements Application Report](#)

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