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Astron rs-5a parts

This article is based on my personal experience fixing these supplies. I also solicited and received input from other people who have experienced the joys of "fixing it yourself." The applicable model numbers start with RS, VS, RM, VM, and SL. There is a lot of helpful information in this article. Some may only be a few words long, but it is all very important, and many useful hints, clues, and tidbits will be found if you read a few times. The most common issues will be covered. It's up to you to verify every component, which include unsoldering one or both leads each part to do so. Try to measure some resistors while installed in the supply, make lead to inaccurate readings. Note that most of the theory and techniques in this article also apply to the Astron 28 volt linear supplies (LS and VLS series), as well as many 13.8-volt linear supplies made by other manufacturers (Pyramid, for example). Switching power supplies (those whose model numbers start with "SS") have their own issues that will not be covered in this article. Failures usually happen for a reason, but they can generally be isolated to a problem with the incoming power (a nearby lightning strike, 240 volts AC applied instead of 120 volts AC, a surge due to generator operation, etc.) or a problem caused by the load (a short circuit or too much current being drawn). Also be aware that a lightning strike can cause some components to act in ways you would never expect, or cause multiple failures, which can mislead you into replacing parts that may not be bad, or not believing some of the measurements you make. Think about how things are supposed to work then try to find out why they aren't working that way. Health and Safety Warnings: During the troubleshooting process, you will be measuring voltages with the power supply cover off and 120 volts AC applied. Be very careful around the AC stuff: the incoming power cord or receptacle, the fuse holder, and the power switch. Lethal voltages are present. Be careful. Before doing repair work on the regulator board or any of the DC circuitry, make sure the AC power is turned off and disconnect the AC line cord, then discharge the main filter capacitor(s) using a 30-300 ohm 2 watt resistor. Attach it to the capacitor's leads and leave it there for 5-15 seconds. There is no bleeder resistor in any of the Astron power supplies (unless you add one yourself). This article assumes that the reader is familiar with simple AC and DC circuits and most electronic components and knows how to use a voltmeter and an ohmmeter. Parts can fail in odd ways. Multiple part failures are rare but they can happen. I can't predict, explain, or suggest repairs for every problem that can crop up. I've done my best to provide a methodical way of bringing life back to many supplies. Dividing and conquer. Disconnect or remove parts to make sure the expected results actually happen. For example, removing the LM723 regulator IC from its socket should let the output voltage go to zero volts. General Linear Power Supply Theory: Astron linear supplies rely on a high current, filtered, unregulated raw source of DC power, created by a large, heavy transformer, some diodes (either discrete stud rectifiers or diode bridges), and one or two filter capacitors. This creates about 22 to 24 volts DC that will drop down to about 18 volts DC under full load. This raw supply is followed by one to eight transistors that provide current to the load. Because these transistors are in series with the load, they're often called series-pass transistors. The output voltage is sensed by circuitry on the regulator board and a control signal is sent to these transistors to maintain a constant output voltage as the load changes. An over-voltage circuit will activate if the output voltage goes too high, and it will apply a short circuit to the output terminals, which will shut down the power supply, causing it to get hot. This may or may not cause the AC fuse to blow. Finally, optional voltage and current metering and/or adjustment pots may be present on the front of the unit. Schematics for most of the models are on-line, but you may have to view a few different ones to find information about meters and front panel adjustment pots. There are a couple of articles in the Astron section of Repeater-Builder about linear power supplies in general, and Astron power supplies in particular. These would be useful to read. This article details the operation of the LM723 regulator IC. Major Circuit Variations: The transformers may or may not have a center-tap on the secondary winding. Usually the RS-series supplies have the center tap, while the SL-series do not. If there's a center-tap lead, it goes to ground and there will be two stud diodes or one or two bridge rectifier packs with only the positive and AC terminals connected. If there is NO center-tap lead, a bridge rectifier will be used with all four terminals connected and the negative terminal goes to ground. Don't confuse the two. I've seen people try grounding the negative terminal of the bridge rectifiers on supplies with a center-tap, with disastrous results. Some of the older supplies had either the over-voltage SCR or the driver transistor mounted to the chassis. Luckily Astron has moved all these parts to the regulator board on supplies manufactured over the last 15 years or so. The latest boards also have one or two small finned heat sinks on each side of the circuit board to help cool the TIP29 driver transistor, and often another small heat sink mounted to the SCR. Incoming Power Problems: Excessive input voltage may, on rare occasions, destroy the transformer's primary winding. I haven't seen this happen but it is possible. There is a surge protector device across the primary winding that looks like a black or red dipped disc capacitor. This may also be destroyed and it could open or short out. The primary winding's DC resistance is usually very low, under 1 ohm but not zero ohms. Many voltage spikes, particularly surges due to lightning, will go right through the power transformer and hit the rectifiers. The diodes may short or open, or both. A shorted diode will cause the AC fuse to blow immediately and repeated attempts may also cause the filter capacitors to bulge or even explode. See this article for a list of the various AC line fuse values. Rarely will anything further down the line be affected. There are also two discrete diodes and a 1000uF capacitor on the regulator board that can short or open or vent through its top. CR6 on the regulator board is a Transient Voltage Suppressor (TVS) that acts like a voltage clamp and should only have an effect when the regulator board's DC voltage exceeds about 35 volts DC. Under normal circumstances, the voltage across the TVS should be about 29 volts DC; you can see these voltages on most Astron schematic diagrams by looking at pin 12 of the LM723 regulator chip. If the voltage spike was excessive, the TVS may turn into a low-value resistor in an attempt to prevent further damage. This will reduce the supply voltage to the LM723 and the supply won't work properly. Most incoming power problems usually show up at the regulator IC, so look for defective parts that, on the schematic diagram, are to the left of the LM723. If the supply is producing the proper DC voltage but there is hum on the output, the most common problems are the emitters or the main filter capacitor that form the raw DC supply. If the supply voltage is coming up very slowly and not providing much or any load current, check the main diodes or bridge rectifiers. The voltage across the main filter capacitor should come up instantly to around 24VDC. Load-related problems: If the load current is excessive or ventilation is blocked, the series-pass transistors on the heat sink could overheat and fail. If they open, you'll find that the supply will no longer be able to maintain the regulated output voltage with full load. If they short out, they'll send raw unregulated voltage to the load. The crowbar circuit will detect the over-voltage condition and it should fire, shorting the output voltage to under 1V and probably blowing the AC fuse. If the crowbar fires and the fuse does not blow the pass transistors will get very HOT. If the supply is putting out 22-24v all the time, one or more of the series-pass transistors or the driver transistor is shorted out. This includes a TO-3 driver transistor mounted on the rear panel of the larger supplies. Usually the crowbar circuit will fire to protect the load but they've been known to go bad. If the crowbar fires and the fuse does not blow the pass transistors will get very HOT. There's a TIP29 driver transistor on the regulator board. This can also open or short, but rarely seems to do so. If all of the series-pass transistors open, the TIP29 might still provide an amp or so to the load. Some older supplies remote-mounted this transistor on the bottom of the chassis. If the load current is too high, the supply should go into current limiting, however not all Astron supplies do this well. There are usually some components whose values are "selected at test" to adjust the point at which current limiting occurs. Some people feel that this should happen at the twice the "rated" current of the supply, however Astron linear supplies have two current ratings: the maximum Intermittent Commercial and Amateur Service (ICAS) current and the maximum Continuous Commercial Service (CCS) current. The digits in the supply's model number specify the ICAS current, i.e. an RS35 is rated for 35 amps ICAS, but the CCS rating is usually around 60 to 70% of the ICAS rating, so the same RS35 is good for about 25 to 28 amps continuously, with adequate ventilation, which usually means a fan added to the heat sink. So the current limiting occurs at 70% of the ICAS current, or at 50 amps for the RS35. A different answer comes from people who use the supply for a different purpose than the intended use, such as for a ham radio power supply. The supply will still work, but dropping the regulated output voltage will full load. To avoid these problems, the main filter capacitor that form the raw DC supply (if the filter cap is bad) you'll have to replace it (Astron sells replacement parts). The output voltage drops to below 1 volt when a load is attached, check the disc capacitor on the regulator IC, pin 13 (or just replace it). If this is leaky or shorted, weird things can happen. If the output voltage is coming up very slowly and not providing much or any load current, check the main diodes or bridge rectifiers. The voltage across the main filter capacitor should come up instantly to around 24VDC. Sometimes "open" diodes leak enough current to allow the main filter capacitor to charge but they won't provide any load current. Miscellaneous Problems: If the supply is putting out proper DC voltage under some load but the front panel ammeter doesn't show any current, one of the series-pass transistors could be open. The ammeter actually measures the voltage drop across one of the 0.1 or 0.05 ohm emitter-balancing resistors; if there's no current, there's no meter indication. If that transistor shorts out and/or its emitter-balancing resistor opens, the ammeter will have excessive current flow through it and will most likely burn out. The calibrating potentiometer in series with the meter could also be open. Replacing either component is your only cure. Most Astron power supplies have an AC power switch. The neon bulb inside the switch has a limited lifetime and will start to flicker or go dim, then eventually stop glowing altogether. There are two cures: first, replacement of the switch. The neon bulb is lit by the incoming 120VAC. Don't make the common mistake of using an automotive switch that has a 12VDC bulb inside. Second option is to disconnect the neon bulb, drill a hole in the front of the supply and add a 12v LED across the supply +12v output. 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