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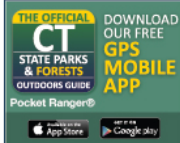
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Compact Fluorescent Lamps

Installing compact fluorescent lights (CFLs) is a simple way for homeowners to reduce their energy bills while also doing something beneficial for the environment. CFLs use less electricity than incandescent lights and last up to 7 years. With energy prices going up and the cost of CFLs coming down, more people are making the switch. The Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (Department) encourages the use of CFLs although they do contain small amounts of mercury. This fact sheet will help you understand the importance of using CFLs and where to take them for proper disposal when they eventually burn out.

CFLs – A Wise Choice

According to the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), CFLs use 2/3 less energy than an incandescent bulb. Switching from an incandescent to a CFL can save the homeowner \$30 in energy costs over the life of the bulb. Not only has the purchase price of CFLs gone down, but the quality of CFLs has gone up. Popular Mechanics recently completed a performance comparison of CFLs and incandescents and found that the CFLs rated higher in overall quality of light. There are other benefits to CFLs as well. Using less energy means lower carbon emissions, which contribute to global climate change, as well as reductions in nitrous oxide, which causes smog. Since Connecticut relies on coal power plants for some of our energy needs, and the burning of coal releases mercury to the environment, using CFLs can lower mercury emissions to our environment. When purchasing CFLs, remember to look for the Energy Star label. Consumers should always handle CFLs carefully to avoid breakage, and refrain from using CFLs in lamps that can be knocked over easily, or in unprotected fixtures where bulbs are particularly at risk of being broken in the presence of young children, as in play spaces.

Labeling

Connecticut law requires that products containing mercury be labeled. The purpose of the label is to inform the consumer that the product contains mercury and advise them to dispose of the lamp properly. Typical labeling on packaging of CFLs reads: "Contains Mercury. Dispose of according to Local, State and Federal Law".



In addition, you may find the symbol (Hg) on linear four-foot fluorescent lights.

Hg is the periodic symbol of the element mercury.

What To Do When A CFL Breaks

Proper use and handling of CFLs in the home should not result in any exposure to mercury. Handle the lamp carefully, installing and removing by the base, never the glass. However, should a CFL break, refer to the Connecticut Department of Public Health's Fact Sheet, [Compact Fluorescent Light Bulbs: What To Do If A Bulb Breaks](#), for detailed clean-up instructions.

Proper Disposal - What It Means And Where To Take CFLs When They Burn Out

Business and other non-residential generated mercury lights are subject to state hazardous waste laws and regulations that prohibit their disposal in the solid waste stream. CFLs and other fluorescent lighting generated by residents are exempt from these disposal restrictions. However, the Department strongly encourages residents to recycle their lamps through town drop offs and household hazardous waste collections. By recycling your burned out CFLs, you help keep mercury out of our environment.

CFLs are accepted at household hazardous waste collections. Refer to the [schedule of household hazardous waste collections](#) for a location near you. Some municipalities offer recycling of CFLs and other fluorescent lamps at their transfer stations or other drop sites. Check with your [local recycling coordinator](#) or Department of Public Works for more information.

In 2008, The Home Depot began a collection program for CFLs. Residents can bring any brand of compact fluorescent lamp, regardless of where it was purchased, to any Connecticut Home Depot. IKEA stores also accept CFLs for recycling.

View more information on [CFLs](#) and on other [home products](#) which use less energy, save money and help to protect our environment.

For further information please contact the Bureau of Materials Management and Compliance Assurance at 860-424-3242 or e-mail [Tom Metzner](#).

Related Links

[Lamp Recyclers](#)
[Universal Waste Rule](#)

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