



Keep Your Business Safe from Mercury - *Recycle used fluorescent tubes and compact fluorescent light bulbs.*



Fluorescent lamps save energy!!

Fluorescent lighting is an excellent business and environmental choice because it can reduce energy consumption by 50 percent and lighting costs by 30-38 percent. Fluorescent lamps last, on an average, ten times longer than conventional incandescent lamps.



Fluorescent lamps contain mercury, so recycle them.

Each fluorescent lamp contains a small quantity of mercury. However, with the large number of lamps in use, this adds up to a significant amount that can be released into the environment if lamps are not recycled properly. Mercury can be toxic to humans and animals if inhaled, absorbed through the skin, or consumed through foods we eat. Other lamps that contain mercury include mercury vapor lamps, metal halide lamps, high-pressure sodium lamps and neon lamps. All of these should be recycled.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Does my business need to recycle fluorescent lamps?

Fluorescent lamps are classified as a universal hazardous waste and all businesses should recycle them. If you are a small business generating less than 220 lbs. of hazardous waste (including fluorescent lamps and other mercury-containing wastes) and less than 2.2 lbs. of acutely hazardous waste within any month of a calendar year, then your business may qualify as a Conditionally Exempt Small Quantity Universal Waste Generator (CESQUWG). (As an example, one box of 36 fluorescent lamps (four-foot long tubes) weighs about 24 lbs.)

CESQUWGs are not subject to the same rules for training, accumulation, and packaging of their hazardous waste that the larger hazardous waste generators are. However, they do need to follow the recycling and disposal requirements of the universal hazardous waste rules in the State of California. CESQUWGs can recycle their lamps at their local government sponsored Hazardous Waste Recycling and Disposal Programs. Or, they can choose to collect and ship the lamps to a lamp recycling business (see attached list of California recyclers).

What Should I Do with Used Fluorescent Lamps?

Before you start to recycle your fluorescent lamps, make sure you and your staff is aware of the regulations and best management practices for handling and storing the wastes. If you are unsure about what is required of you, contact the Santa Clara County Hazardous Waste Recycling and Disposal Program at (408) 299-7300 for information. Additional resources may be found at the websites listed at the end of this article.

- **Storage** - Store used fluorescent lamps for recycling in sturdy cardboard boxes (e.g. the ones they were shipped in). If those boxes are not available, some can be purchased from fluorescent lamp recyclers. Store boxes or containers in a secure, dry place.
- **Labeling** - Place a label on the container with the date you started collecting lamps in it and mark it with the words "Used Lamps", "Waste Lamps" or "Universal Waste-lamps."
- **Breakages** - If lamps are accidentally broken, clean them up promptly. Wear protective plastic or latex gloves to avoid touching the glass with your bare hands. Use pieces of cardboard to push the glass into a pile and carefully pick up the shards, placing them inside a heavy plastic bag that is

placed inside of box or in a rigid container that can be sealed. Place a label on the container indicating that broken lamps are inside. Do not mix broken lamp debris in with the unbroken spent lamps you are recycling; otherwise the recycler for handling the wastes may charge you extra.

- Recycling - Used lamps should not be accumulated for more than one year from the date you start collecting them until the time you recycle them.

Where to take used fluorescent lamps:

- **Santa Clara County businesses (except Palo Alto)** - The Santa Clara County Hazardous Waste Recycling and Disposal Program can take fluorescent lamps and other types of hazardous waste from CESQUWGs. Businesses using the service will be asked for a waste inventory and an EPA ID number and will be given a drop-off appointment. For information on how to obtain an EPA ID number visit www.DTSC.ca.gov and look under Frequently Requested Information. A temporary California ID number can be obtained by calling 1-800-618-6942. Businesses are charged disposal fees based on waste type and quantity. Fees are collected at time of drop-off. For more information call (408) 299-7300 or visit www.hhw.org.
- **Palo Alto businesses** - CESQUWGs located in Palo Alto and its partner cities of East Palo Alto, Mountain View, Stanford, Los Altos and Los Altos Hills can dispose of their fluorescent lamps and hazardous waste at the Palo Alto Regional Water Quality Control Plant. Events are held monthly and by appointment only. For more information about Palo Alto's hazardous waste program call (650) 496-6980 or visit <http://www.cityofpaloalto.org/depts/pwd/news/details.asp?NewsID=352&TargetID=181>
- **Recycling Firms** - Arrangements can also be made with a lamp recycling business to accept the lamps and ship them to a recycling business on your own. (See attached list of local recyclers). Common transportation carriers (e.g., UPS and FedEx) can pick up the lamps and transport them to a recycler. Also, some recyclers can schedule pick-ups from your business as a part of one of their regular routes. Check with a recycler to find out what their particular options and requirements are.

How else can you help reduce mercury pollution?

Buy low-mercury fluorescent lamps - Major lighting manufacturers now produce lamps with up to 80% less mercury than standard fluorescent lamps, such as Philips "Alto", GE "Ecolux" and Sylvania "Ecologic". However, none of these lamps are completely mercury-free, so they need to be recycled.

For more information on mercury visit:

- The US EPA's website at <http://www.epa.gov/mercury>
- Find information on non-mercury alternatives to consumer products at http://www.michigan.gov/deq/0,1607,7-135-3307_29693_4175-11695--,00.html
- The NEWMOA website at <http://www.newmoa.org/prevention/mercury>



Brought to you by the Santa Clara Valley Urban Runoff Pollution Prevention Program, a coalition of local government agencies.