

Disposal of Used or Broken Compact Fluorescent Lights

Disposing of Used CFLs

Homeowners are encouraged to take advantage of local disposal programs for CFLs, where available.

Governments are working with CFL manufacturers and major Canadian retailers to expand recycling options.

Many municipalities have programs that accept household products that contain mercury. Some have implemented collection programs specifically for mercury-containing switches such as those found in your car, while others collect mercury-containing products as part of their household hazardous waste programs. Contact your municipality to find out about local disposal options.

ENERGY STAR qualified CFLs have a warranty. If the bulb fails within the warranty period, return it to your retailer.

Disposal of Broken CFLs

A spill of the amount of mercury found in household products, such as CFLs does not usually pose an immediate health risk to you or your family. However, proper clean up and disposal is required. You can minimize any risk of mercury contamination by following these basic guidelines:

When a CFL breaks on a hard surface:

- Open windows (if possible) to ventilate the room for a few minutes.
- Wear rubber gloves and scoop or sweep up the debris with a stiff paper or cardboard, and then place the debris in a sealed plastic bag.
- Wipe the area with a damp paper towel and put it all in that same sealed plastic bag.
- Dispose of the bag in accordance with local disposal options as mentioned above.

When a CFL breaks on a carpet:

- Open windows (if possible) to ventilate the room for a few minutes.
- Wear rubber gloves to remove as much debris as possible with a stiff paper or cardboard.
- Use sticky tape (such as duct tape) to pick up any small pieces of glass or fine particles, and then if necessary, vacuum the area and then immediately dispose of the vacuum bag along with the debris and sticky tape in a sealed plastic bag.
 - If the vacuum does not have a disposable bag, wipe the inside of the vacuum with a damp paper towel and put it in the sealed plastic bag.
- Dispose of in accordance with local disposal options as mentioned above.

All of this can be done by oneself – no need to call in a hazardous waste team.

For more information about:

- CFLs and energy-efficient lighting in general, visit Natural Resources Canada's ENERGY STAR Web site at www.energystar.gc.ca
- mercury and the environment, visit Environment Canada's Web site at www.ec.gc.ca/mercury.
- mercury and human health, visit Health Canada's Web site at www.hc-sc.gc.ca/iyh-vsiv/enviro/merc_e.html or see *Mercury: Your Health and the Environment* at www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ewh-semt/alt_formats/hecs-sesc/pdf/pubs/contaminants/mercury/mercur_e.pdf.