



Recycle at Work

FLUORESCENT LAMPS AND BULBS

Newer fluorescent lamps and ballasts are highly energy efficient and contain less mercury than previous bulbs. Still, it's important to recycle them properly; even a small amount of mercury can harm humans, animals and the environment.

Did you know?

Several million lamps are discarded in Oregon every year, creating the largest source of mercury pollution in the waste stream.

Importance of safe disposal

All fluorescent bulbs contain mercury, a naturally occurring toxic metal. These include ultraviolet-A (UVA) bulbs, compact fluorescent light bulbs, and high-intensity discharge (HID) and neon lighting. When incinerated, crushed in a landfill or otherwise broken, fluorescent bulbs release mercury into the environment. Proper recycling reduces this risk, helping protect people and the food chain from exposure and contamination.

Steps to recycle fluorescent bulbs

- Ensure that staff responsible for replacing light fixtures and components know the regulations and best management practices. Learn more at www.deq.state.or.us/lq/pubs/factsheets/hw/lampballasts.pdf.
- Choose a recycling firm. The company will explain how to manage and store bulbs, transport used bulbs for recycling and provide a recycling certificate upon completion.
- Reuse original boxes or store bulbs in containers from your recycler.
- Store lamps in a dry place in boxes and areas clearly marked "Used Lamps."
- If lamps are accidentally broken, promptly clean the area, putting the shards and any powder in a plastic bag or other container and sealing the contents. Wash hands afterward. Contact your lamp recycler or Metro for proper handling, and visit www.epa.gov/mercury/spills/index.htm#fluorescent for additional information.
- If you are a property owner or manager, tell tenants that you're recycling the bulbs in their building. They will appreciate the effort.

For more information

Visit www.RecycleAtWork.com or call Metro Recycling Information at 503-234-3000.

continued

Fact sheets were created by Metro and your local governments to help reduce waste in the business sector. Printed on recycled paper. 10148



Metro



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from Metro and your local governments

Average recycling costs

Each recycler sets different rates, depending on bulb type; number of bulbs; and cost for pickup, if required. The average cost to recycle bulbs is about 40 cents to \$1 per 4-foot tube.

Mercury-free options

Whether choosing lighting for new construction or retrofitting existing buildings, consider mercury-free, energy-efficient options such as light-emitting diode (LED) lamps.

Learn more at www.epa.gov/epawaste/hazard/wastetypes/universal/lamps/faqs.htm#9.

LEARN MORE ABOUT WASTE PREVENTION

Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)

503-229-5913

Fact sheet on managing lamps and ballasts:
www.deq.state.or.us/lq/pubs/factsheets/hw/lampballasts.pdf

Metro Recycling Information

503-234-3000

www.oregonmetro.gov/recycling

Interactive directory of local recycler and reuse sites:
www.oregonmetro.gov/findarecycler

Sources

**Oregon Department of Environmental Quality
Oregon Environmental Council**