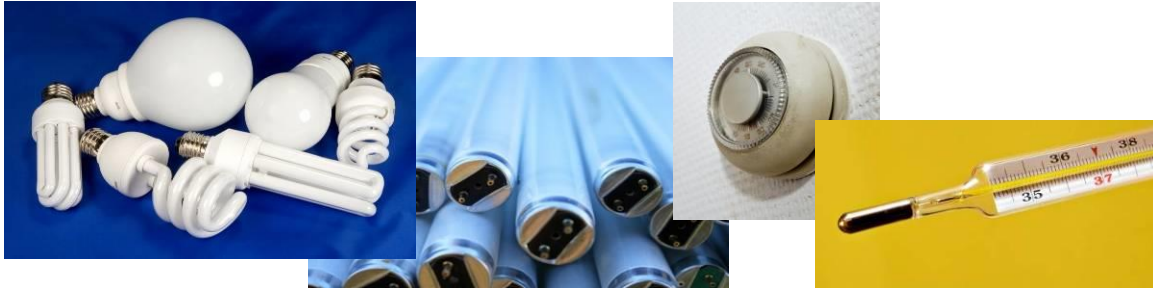


Mercury Containing Products Safe Handling & Disposal Fact Sheet

Fluorescent Lighting Products, Thermostats, Thermometers, Switches...



Benefits

Mercury is currently an essential component of fluorescent lighting products and is what allows the bulb to be an efficient source of light. The mercury is sealed within the glass tubing of the bulb and is not released when the bulb is intact. In the case of thermostats, thermometers and switches, mercury poses an unnecessary hazard and can be easily replaced with electronic alternatives.

Health Risks

Mercury (Hg) is also a nerve toxin that affects the brain, spinal cord, kidneys, and liver and can impair the way we see, hear, walk, talk, and behave. Broken devices can vaporize, contaminate the air in our homes, and sometimes go down the drain or end up in the atmosphere where it can end up in the fish we consume in the form of methyl mercury.

Disposal

All mercury containing products must be disposed of properly with the Household Hazardous Waste Home Collection Program. Typical products include: lamps, bulbs, switches, thermometers, thermostats, or any other mercury containing item.

Household Hazardous Waste Home Collection

Free service for residents.

Hotline:

1 (800) 714-1195

Website:

sustainablem.org/hhw

"Only 2% of CFLs are recycled in the U.S. Most of the 98% of CFLs that are discarded get smashed en route to landfills and incinerators in packer trucks, releasing mercury vapors that are inhaled by trash collectors and escape into the air to settle out and be washed into our streams and rivers."

California Product Stewardship Council, CPSC

In Case of an Emergency

If contact with mercury occurs, call the California Poison Control Center at (800) 876-4766.



Resource Recovery & Recycle
sustainablem.org/hhw
310.458-2223

Hazardous Lamps – Require HHW Center Disposal



CFLs contain mercury. If they screw into regular light sockets, they always have a plastic transformer.

HIDs have a small tube and contain mercury.

Non-Hazardous Lamps – Place in the Trash



Breakage or Spill Facts

Safe Handling, Clean-up & Disposal Information for Fluorescent Lighting Products, Thermostats, Thermometers, Switches, and Other Mercury Containing Items

Reduce Risk

Replace existing thermometers and thermostats with modern electronic equivalents. Take the mercury containing items to the Household Hazardous Waste Center. Prevent placing bulbs and mercury containing items in places where they may easily break or be knocked over.

In the Event of Breakage or Spill - Protect Yourself and Family

- Immediately remove children and pets from the area, and don't let anyone walk through the breakage area on their way out.
- Ventilate the room, open windows and leave the room for 15 minutes or more.
- Shut-off the central forced-air heating/air conditioning system, if you have one.
- Wear latex gloves.
- Use a flashlight to help you locate the spilled beads or glass.
- Avoid household cleaning products to clean the spill, such as ammonia or chlorine that will react with mercury and release a toxic gas.
- Since mercury is tasteless and odorless, always use caution since you won't know if you are being contaminated.

Clean-up Steps for Hard Surfaces

- Do not use a vacuum or broom to clean up the broken bulb on hard surfaces.
- Carefully scoop up glass fragments and powder using stiff paper or cardboard and place them in a glass jar with metal lid or in a sealed plastic bag.
- Use sticky tape, such as a duct tape, to pick up any remaining small glass fragments and powder or wipe the area with a damp disposable paper towel to remove all glass fragments.
- Use a glass eyedropper or index card to scoop up mercury beads from broken thermometers or thermostats.
- Wipe area clean with damp paper towels or disposable wet wipes and place them in the glass jar or plastic bag.

Clean-up Steps for Carpeting or Rug

- Carefully pick up glass fragments and place them in a glass jar with metal lid or in a sealed plastic bag.
- Use sticky tape, such as a duct tape, to pick up any remaining small glass fragments and powder.
- If vacuuming is needed after all visible materials are removed, vacuum the area where the bulb was broken.
- Remove the vacuum bag (or empty and wipe the canister) and put the bag or vacuum debris in a sealed plastic bag.
- Cut out or remove the affected area since mercury can split into tiny beads and never be detected.

Clean-up Steps for Clothing, Bedding, etc.

- If clothing or bedding materials come in direct contact with broken glass or mercury-containing powder from inside the bulb that may stick to the fabric, the clothing or bedding should be discarded. Do not wash such clothing or bedding because mercury fragments in the clothing may contaminate the machine and/or pollute sewage.

- You can, however, wash clothing or other materials that have been exposed to the mercury vapor from a broken CFL, such as the clothing you happened to be wearing when you cleaned up the broken CFL, as long as that clothing has not come into direct contact with the materials from the broken bulb.
- If shoes come into direct contact with broken glass or mercury-containing powder from the bulb, wipe them off with damp paper towels or disposable wet wipes. Place the towels or wipes in a glass or plastic bag for disposal.

Future Cleaning of Carpeting or Rug

- For at least the next few times you vacuum, shut off the central forced-air heating/air conditioning system and open a window prior to vacuuming.
- Keep the central heating/air conditioning system shut off and the window open for at least 15 minutes after vacuuming is completed.

Disposal of Clean-up Materials

- Immediately take the materials outside and store outdoors in a protected area until you can safely have them removed with the Household Hazardous Waste Home Collection Program. .
- Wash your hands after disposing of the jars or plastic bags containing clean-up materials.



Resource Recovery & Recycle
sustianablesm.org/hhw
310.458-2223