



CITY OF MIDWEST CITY

STORMWATER QUALITY MANAGEMENT

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FLUORESCENT LAMP DISPOSAL



With the rise in national media attention to energy supply and cost issues, has come increased attention on energy savings measures, especially Compact Fluorescent Lamps, or CFLs. With this attention has also come concern about the safety of these types of light bulbs. Fluorescent lamps—including CFLs—contain trace amounts of vaporized Mercury, a heavy metal and known neurotoxin. The Mercury, or Hg, content of CFLs is typically in the range of .4mg. To provide some comparison, a typical, industry-standard T-12 commercial fluorescent lamp contains in the neighborhood of 20mg of vaporized Mercury. Older, glass thermometers for home use typically contain 500mg of liquid Mercury. While in operation and as long as the bulb is intact, CFLs do not release Mercury, and their use actually leads to an overall decrease in Mercury in the environment through reductions in electricity generated by the combustion of coal. CFLs use 75% less energy than incandescent bulbs, resulting in average savings per bulb of \$35. The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) also estimates that if every American changed at least five incandescent bulbs to CFLs, greenhouse gases emissions equivalent to that from nearly 10 million cars would be avoided.

How should I clean up a broken fluorescent bulb?

EPA recommends the following clean-up and disposal guidelines:

1. Open a window to vent the Room and leave the room for 15 minutes or more.
2. Shut off the central forced-air heating/air conditioning system, if you have one.

Clean-Up Steps for Hard Surfaces

3. Carefully scoop up glass fragments and powder using stiff paper or cardboard and place them in a glass jar with metal lid (such as a canning jar) or in a sealed plastic bag.
4. Use sticky tape, such as duct tape, to pick up any remaining small glass fragments and powder.
5. Wipe the area clean with damp paper towels or disposable wet wipes and place them in the glass jar or plastic bag.
6. Do not use a vacuum or broom to clean up the broken bulb on hard surfaces.

Clean-up Steps for Carpeting or Rug

3. Carefully pick up glass fragments and place them in a glass jar with metal lid (such as a canning jar) or in a sealed plastic bag.
4. Use sticky tape, such as duct tape, to pick up any remaining small glass fragments and powder.
5. If vacuuming is needed after all visible materials are removed, vacuum the area where the bulb was broken.
6. Remove the vacuum bag (or empty and wipe the canister), and put the bag or vacuum debris in a sealed plastic bag.

Disposal of Clean-up Materials

7. Immediately place all cleanup materials outside the building in a trash container or outdoor protected area for the next normal trash.
8. Wash your hands after disposing of the jars or plastic bags containing clean-up materials.
9. Check with your local or state government about disposal requirements in your specific area. Some states prohibit such trash disposal and require that broken and unbroken lamps be taken to a local recycling center.

Future Cleaning of Carpeting or Rug: Vent the Room During and After Vacuuming

10. 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.
11. Keep the central heating/air conditioning system off and the windows open to vent the room for 15 minutes after vacuuming.

Intact CFLs and other Household Hazardous Waste (HHW), can be disposed of for free by contacting the Midwest City Stormwater Quality Division at 739-1049. Residents can schedule appointments to drop off CFLs and HHW on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 7:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.