

Disposal of energy efficient lighting tubes and bulbs

Small amounts of mercury are contained in T5 energy efficient fluorescent light tubes and compact fluorescent lamps (CFL) energy saving bulbs. The amount used in these new types of bulbs is much less than in older style fluorescent tubes.

Even if a bulb breaks this does **not** constitute a significant health risk to exposed adults (including pregnant women) or children. This is due to the very small amounts of mercury present and the short exposure time. To prevent any safety or environmental concerns by staff or the community the following information is provided to carry out appropriate clean up and disposal.

Disposal of intact tubes and bulbs

In the first instance, do not throw these bulbs into your waste or recycling bin – try to safely recycle the bulbs:

- use the links below to see if you can locate a local recycling program that can take your waste bulbs
- contact local businesses to determine if they have disposal programs. There may be costs associated with these services which would be paid for by the departmental workplace.

If you can't recycle, these bulbs can be disposed of in your regular rubbish bin provided the rubbish goes to landfill.

Check with your [local council](#) to confirm if your rubbish goes to landfill (e.g. not to a waste processor).

Wrap the bulb or tube tightly in newspaper or put it in the original or new bulb's box.

Where possible, place directly into your industrial bin rather than in your regular bin. This will reduce the risk of breakage when cleaners empty these bins and further clean up or injury from broken glass

What can be recycled?

- Linear fluorescent tubes
- U-shaped and coated fluorescents
- High pressure mercury vapour
- High pressure sodium vapour
- Metal halide
- Ultraviolet
- Projector lamps
- Compact fluorescent lamps
- Incandescent lamps
- Neon tubing

Disposal of broken tubes and bulbs

- open nearby windows and allow the room to ventilate for 15 minutes
- turn off air conditioning or heating during this time
- use disposable gloves during clean up
- scoop up broken material with something you can then throw out or wipe down – e.g. stiff paper or cardboard instead of a brush – avoid generating and inhaling dust
- wipe up the remaining debris with a damp cloth or sticky tape
- discard all items – preferably place in a sealed container
- dispose of all items in an outside rubbish bin - that preferably has a lid
- if vacuuming is required to remove residual material; discard the vacuum bag afterwards or wipe clean.

Further information

- [Local Councils – disposal advice and local waste collection services](#)
- [Lamp recycling services](#)
- [Safe disposal of mercury-containing lamps](#)
- Contact [Regional Facilities Staff](#) for questions regarding energy efficient lighting and power systems
- Contact Regional [Senior Health and Safety Consultants](#) for health and safety enquiries