

Why Recycle?

Mercury containing lamps are an energy efficient source of lighting. According to energystar.gov energy star qualified CFLs use up to 75 percent less energy than incandescent light bulbs, last up to 10 times longer, cost little up front, and provide a quick return on investment.

In order to achieve this level of efficiency all fluorescent, metal halide, neon, low pressure sodium, and UV lamps contain a certain amount of mercury. The amount of mercury varies according to the type and size of bulb as well as the date of manufacture. Older fluorescent bulbs typically contain more mercury than their more recent incarnations. According to the EPA the amount of mercury in lamps varies widely, depending on the type of lamp. Some fluorescent lamps have as little as 3.5 mg mercury, but some neon lights have as much as 100 mg.

According to the Journal of the Air & Waste Management Association, in the U.S., 2 to 4 tons of mercury are released annually from the disposal of approximately 620 million fluorescent lamps. Proper packaging and recycling of spent lamps greatly reduces the mercury dilemma, creating a much safer environment. When disposed of properly, mercury is captured through extraction techniques and reused in other manufacturing processes.

Lamps that Contain Mercury

- *Fluorescent lamps*
- *Compact Fluorescent lamps*
- *Low Pressure Sodium*
- *Metal Halide Lamps*
- *Neon Lamps*
- *UV Lamps*
- *Any Lamps labeled (Hg)*

Mercury Facts

Mercury is a silvery, heavy, odorless liquid metal.

Mercury is a naturally occurring element that can be found throughout the environment. Mercury is the only metal that exists as a liquid at room temperature. Mercury expands and contracts according to temperature changes, combines easily with other metals, and conducts electricity.

Mercury is a *poison*. It can be absorbed into the body through air passageways (breathing vapors) or through the skin. It causes irritation to the skin and eyes. If inhaled, the vapor can cause irritation to the lungs, causing cough, chest pain, and shortness of breath.

Repeated exposure, even to low quantities, can cause mercury poisoning. Symptoms include tremors, trouble remembering and concentrating, gum problems, and changes in mood.

Methyl mercury is highly toxic and accumulates in body tissues. The developing fetus is the most sensitive to the effects of mercury, so women of childbearing age are the population of greatest concern.

According to the Environmental Protection Agency's 1999 National Emissions Inventory, coal-fired electric power plants are the largest source of human-caused mercury air emissions in the United States. Fluorescent lamps save energy over incandescent lamps, therefore reducing the mercury output of coal power plants. Over its lifetime a coal energy fed compact fluorescent lamp will prevent a greater quantity of mercury entering the environment than it contains itself.

More Mercury Information

- <http://www.epa.gov/mercury/>
- <http://earth911.org/mercury>
- <http://www.epa.gov/hg/about.htm>
- <http://www.almr.org/>

Recycling Program

The City of Lawrence/Douglas County Household Hazardous Waste Facility is able to accept mercury containing lamps from businesses in Douglas County. Recycling of all business generated mercury lamps from Douglas County is available for a nominal fee. This fee is the same amount that the City of Lawrence/Douglas County Household Hazardous Waste Facility Lamp Recycling Contractor charges plus a 15% administrative fee to cover the time of the specialists inventorying the waste, and the cost of the shipping containers.

The City of Lawrence Waste Reduction and Recycling Division is also able to accept other Douglas County business wastes such as paint, motor oil, solvents and corrosives through the Business Hazardous Waste (BHW) Program. These are all items that should not be poured down the drain or put in the trash. In fact, by law, the State of Kansas requires that they be disposed in an environmentally sound manner.

Acceptance of pre-qualified BHW hazardous waste is on an appointment basis only. To schedule an inventory appointment please call 785-832-3030.

Common Business Hazardous Waste products:

- Pesticides
- Latex Paint
- Oil-Base Paint
- Varnishes
- Paint Thinners
- Adhesives
- Motor Oil
- Antifreeze
- Cleaners
- Aerosol Cans
- Photo Chemicals
- Mercury Lamps

More information at:
www.LawrenceRecycles.org

How to Recycle

For small to medium quantities of mercury lamps Call the City of Lawrence/Douglas County Business Hazardous Waste Program at 785-832-3030.

For large quantities of mercury lamps contact one of the following contractors directly.

- Waste Management Lamptracker - <https://www.wmlamptracker.com>
- A-Tec Inc. - www.a-tec-recycling.com
- Fluorecycle, Inc. - www.fluorecycle.com

Handling Broken lamps

<http://www.epa.gov/mercury/spills/index.htm>

Do not vacuum a mercury spill

1. Ventilate and vacate the area for 15 minutes or more
2. Scoop up debris and place in a plastic bag
3. Use tape or other adhesive material to remove small particles from porous surfaces, place in bag.
4. Place that bag in another sealable plastic bag
5. Dispose of the debris as solid waste

Handling Mercury Spills

Greater than a thermometer

Don't vacuum.

1. Have everyone else leave the area; don't let anyone walk through the mercury on their way out.
2. Open all windows and doors to the outside.
3. Turn down the temperature.
4. Shut all doors to other parts of the building, and leave the area.
5. Call the Kansas Department of Health and Environment at (785) 296-1679.

Spills of More than Two Tablespoons (One Pound)

Any time one pound or more of mercury is released to the environment, it is mandatory to call the National Response Center (NRC). The NRC hotline operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Call (800) 424-8802. Note that because mercury is heavy, only two tablespoons of mercury weigh about one pound.

Business Mercury Lamp Recycling



More information at:
www.LawrenceRecycles.org