


# CFL FACT SHEET

Compact Fluorescent Light Bulbs Use 75 Percent Less Energy



## A QUICK BULB-BUYING GUIDE

- **Before you run out to the store**, take a look at the light fixture you're planning to use a CFL in so you are sure to buy the right size and brightness of bulb.
- **Very important:** Check for the ENERGY STAR® logo on the package. Only bulbs that meet or exceed government energy efficiency standards can carry it, and these are the CFLs you want to purchase.  

- **Dimmer switches** require special dimmer CFLs. They'll cost a bit more, but they're made for the job and will last much longer.
- **Do the math.** Generally, choose a CFL using approximately one-fourth the wattage of the incandescent you're replacing. This should provide about the same amount of illumination. Most CFL packaging lists the equivalencies.
- **Only purchase CFLs** for outdoor use when the glass will be protected from the elements.

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# SWITCH TO THE NEW GENERATION OF CFL BULBS AND SAVE



The big news about today's compact fluorescent light bulbs is their energy savings. To produce the same amount of light as an incandescent bulb, a CFL uses just one-fourth of the energy.

In fact, new generation ENERGY STAR-qualified CFLs use about 75 percent less energy than standard incandescent bulbs and last up to 10 times longer. CFLs also produce about 75 percent less heat, meaning they are safer to operate, but also can save you more than \$40 in electricity costs over the lifetime of the bulb, depending on the wattage and hours of use.

Compact fluorescents are now manufactured in a wide variety of sizes and styles for every use, from three-way bulbs to outdoor bulbs, and from dimmers to recessed light fixtures.

## CFLS AND MERCURY

CFLs contain a very small amount of mercury sealed within the glass tubing – an average of 4 milligrams. By comparison, older thermometers contain about 500 milligrams of mercury – an amount equal to the mercury in 125 CFLs. Mercury allows a fluorescent bulb to be an efficient light source. No mercury is released when the bulbs are intact (not broken) or in use.

Most makers of light bulbs have reduced mercury in their fluorescent lighting products. Thanks to technology advances and a commitment from members of the National Electrical Manufacturers Association, the average mercury content in CFLs has dropped at least 20 percent or more in the past several years. Some manufacturers even have made further reductions, dropping mercury content to 1 milligram per light bulb.

Because CFLs also help to reduce greenhouse gasses, other pollutants associated with electricity production and landfill waste (because the bulbs last longer), they are clearly the environmental winner when compared to traditional incandescent light bulbs.

## CLEANING UP A BROKEN CFL

CFLs contain a small amount of mercury sealed within the glass tubing. When a fluorescent bulb breaks in your home, some of this mercury is released as mercury vapor. The broken bulb can continue to release mercury vapor until it is cleaned up and removed from the residence. To minimize exposure to mercury vapor, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency recommends that residents follow the cleanup and disposal steps described below.

### BEFORE CLEANUP

- Have people and pets leave the room.
- Air out the room for 5-10 minutes by opening a window or door to the outdoor environment.
- Shut off the central forced air heating/air conditioning system, if you have one.
- Collect materials needed to clean up the broken bulb.

### DURING CLEANUP

- Be thorough in collecting broken glass and visible powder.
- Place cleanup materials in a sealable container.

### AFTER CLEANUP

- Promptly place all bulb debris and cleanup materials outdoors in a trash container or protected area until materials can be disposed of properly. Avoid leaving any bulb fragments or cleanup materials indoors.
- If practical, continue to air out the room where the bulb was broken and leave the heating/air conditioning system shut off for several hours.

## RECYCLING AND PROPER DISPOSAL

The EPA encourages the recycling of CFLs rather than disposing of them in regular household trash. Recycling CFLs is one of the best ways to help prevent mercury releases to the environment by keeping them out of landfills and incinerators. Many states and local agencies, in addition to home improvement centers and other retailers, have developed collection and recycling programs for CFLs. Some counties and cities also have household hazardous waste collection programs. For information about these programs, contact your local waste management authority. Collection programs in your area also can be found at [www.earth911.com](http://www.earth911.com).

