



Avoid Fines for Improper Fluorescent Lamp Disposal

Introduction: Fluorescent bulbs fall under universal waste rules enforced by the EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) since they contain mercury which is harmful to people and the environment. Companies that don't follow proper disposal methods face steep penalties. The Long Island Rail Road (LIRR) was found to be improperly disposing fluorescent bulbs during an EPA inspection and fined \$43,875.

Problem: Most people don't realize that fluorescent bulbs contain highly toxic mercury and every time they are tossed into the regular trash, mercury is released into the environment. Though the amount of mercury is small, it adds up fast considering the large quantities of fluorescent lamps being used today. Newer lamps contain much less mercury and are identified by a "green tip". However, some states have stricter requirements and may require that even "green tip" spent bulbs be handled as a hazardous waste.

Impact: *"Fluorescent lights are super efficient -- up to 80% more than incandescent bulbs -- which is great for the environment, but they do have to be handled properly once they burn out!"*

Solutions: *- EPA Regional Administrator, Alan J. Steinberg*

- Other lamps like high-intensity discharge (HID), neon, mercury vapor, high pressure sodium, compact fluorescent and metal halide lamps.
- Batteries
- Computer parts
- Thermostats

Benefits: Recycling systems can capture up to 99% of the mercury in fluorescent bulbs and the mercury can be reused in new bulbs. Pre-paid recycling provides added convenience since the transportation; disposal and certificate are included in a single fee paid in advance. Benefits of the pre-paid recycling program include:

- Safe handling prevents personnel injuries
- Environmentally friendly disposal reduces toxic contamination
- EPA compliance to avoid costly fines
- Pre-Paid shipping simplifies pickup with a single phone call
- Convenient containers provided to safely collect spent products

Analysis: Pre-paid recycling is the most convenient method for EPA compliance and safe handling of universal waste products. These programs, approved by the EPA, ensure safe disposal and avoid costly fines. Put your mind at ease and exercise corporate responsibility with proper disposal of fluorescent lamps and other universal waste products.

For more information about the federal rules for the proper disposal of mercury and other toxic metal-containing bulbs visit:

<http://www.epa.gov/region02/waste/spent-lamp.pdf>