



How to Clean Up Broken CFLs and Other Mercury-containing Lamps and Tubes

Households or Small Amounts of Breakage

Most “energy-efficient” lighting is hazardous when broken because it contains mercury.

- Fluorescent tubes, including low mercury tubes.
- Compact fluorescents, including low mercury lamps.
- High Intensity Discharge (HID) lamps
- Metal halide lamps, such as floodlights for large indoor and outdoor areas and gymnasiums.
- Sodium lamps, such as those sometimes used as security lighting and outdoor floodlights.
- Mercury vapor lamps, such as those sometimes used for street lighting

Mercury is present in the white powder “phosphor” coating inside the tube or bulb and also as a vapor within the intact tube or bulb. Although any single tube or bulb contains only a very small amount of mercury, it is important to follow these simple cleanup directions to prevent contamination of your home and environment.

In a household or for small quantity breakages, **do not use a standard vacuum cleaner!** Do not use ordinary residential and commercial floor vacuums, floor vacuums that trap dirt with water, or wet/dry shop vacuums. (For vacuum cleaning, only vacuums designed and approved specifically for hazardous waste may be used.)

Instead of vacuuming, wear latex gloves and carefully clean up the fragments. Wipe the area with a damp disposable paper towel to remove all glass fragments and associated mercury.

Keep all people and pets away from the area being cleaned so that mercury-containing pieces and powder are not tracked into other areas.

Keep the area well ventilated during clean-up and for an additional half hour to disperse any mercury vapor that may have escaped.

After clean up is complete, place all fragments along with cleaning materials and gloves into a sealable (“zip-lock”) plastic bag. Use a permanent pen to mark the bag “Mercury Lamp Accidental Breakage.” Take the bag with intact lamps for recycling.

Do not eat, drink, or smoke during clean-up or until after removing gloves and washing hands.

Adapted from Calif Integrated Waste Mgmt Board website: www.ciwmb.ca.gov/WPIE/FluoresLamps/#CleanBreak

