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## **DEP Encourages Use and Recycling of Compact Fluorescent Lamps**

*--CFLs reduce energy consumption and prevent greenhouse gas emissions--*

**TALLAHASSEE** - Encouraged by the growing popularity of compact fluorescent lamps, or CFLs, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is urging residents to continue replacing incandescent lights with this energy-efficient technology that now comes in a variety of sizes and lighting qualities. CFLs should be recycled with other household hazardous waste items.

"While energy-efficient lighting is beneficial for your home, it is important to know how to recycle the bulbs to ensure protection of the environment," said DEP Secretary Michael W. Sole. "Both the Department and the federal Environmental Protection Agency are working with groups nationwide to identify ways to make recycling of compact fluorescent light bulbs much easier for consumers in the future."

CFLs are small fluorescent light bulbs that can be screwed into a regular light socket, use about 75 percent less energy than standard incandescent bulbs and last up to 10 times longer. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), if every American home replaced just one light bulb with an ENERGY STAR qualified CFL, it would save enough energy to light more than three million homes for a year and prevent greenhouse gas emissions equivalent to more than 800,000 cars.

Each CFL does contain a very small amount of mercury – usually around 5 milligrams, or about the amount that would cover the tip of a ball-point pen. In comparison, a mercury fever thermometer usually contains about 500 milligrams of mercury. DEP is encouraging residents to recycle CFLs. If a CFL or other fluorescent lamp should break in your home, DEP recommends the following guidelines for cleanup:

### **1. Ventilate the room**

Open a window.

Leave the room and restrict access for at least 30 minutes.



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DEP Secretary*

If available, point a floor or pedestal fan at the open window. Using a ceiling fan will not be as helpful at moving the air out of the window.

## **2. Pick up all materials you can**

Wear disposable gloves.

Carefully scoop up the fragments and powder with stiff paper or cardboard.

Sticky tape (such as duct tape) can be used to pick up small pieces and powder.

Wipe the area clean with a damp paper towel or disposable wet wipe.

## **3. Double bag and recycle**

Place the broken CFL and cleanup materials in doubled plastic bags and seal the bags.

Take the materials to a local household hazardous waste center or collection event, a fluorescent lamp recycling facility, or put into the household trash stored outside if no other recycling options are available.

## **4. Wash your hands**

Florida has first-rate household hazardous waste programs that accept fluorescent bulbs in nearly every county. To find a place to recycle these bulbs and other household hazardous waste items, visit [www.earth911.org](http://www.earth911.org) or call 1-800-CLEANUP to use your zip code to learn about the recycling options in your area of Florida. For more information on CFLs, visit EPA's website at

[http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=cfls.pr\\_cfls](http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=cfls.pr_cfls).

[EXIT Disclaimer](#)

For more information on DEP's Division of Waste Management mercury program, visit

<http://www.dep.state.fl.us/waste/categories/mercury>.