



Fluorescent lights

The Virginia Department of Environmental Quality encourages businesses and the public to recycle wastes when possible.

Individuals in Virginia are not required by regulations to recycle fluorescent lights. However, Businesses are required to comply with Virginia's hazardous waste regulations when managing used fluorescent lamps.

Recycling traditional fluorescent lights and compact fluorescent light bulbs is especially important because they contain small amounts of [mercury](#). Compact fluorescent lights are energy-efficient bulbs that can be used in most household lamps.

Individuals, homeowners

If you break a fluorescent light bulb (including compact fluorescent lights), you can minimize any risks by following cleanup and disposal recommendations from the [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency](#).

The following information includes tips on how to manage burned out compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs) appropriately:

- Two retailers – [Home Depot](#) and [Ikea](#) – currently take back CFLs from homeowners. Take your burned out CFL to any Home Depot orange box store returns desk and hand it to an associate who will recycle it for you. Ikea has a collection area in its stores where customers can place fluorescent light bulbs including CFLs to be recycled.
- You can purchase boxes online or in retail stores and mail your used CFLs to be recycled: [Mail-in programs for CFLs](#)
- Check directly with your local waste management agency on the recycling options and disposal guidelines in your community: [Local government recycling contacts](#)
- If your community has a household hazardous waste drop-off center or offers household hazardous waste collection events, check to see if CFLs are accepted. Please contact your local government for more information on these events: [Hazardous household waste contacts](#).
- If recycling is not an option where you live, simply place the CFL bulb in a plastic bag and seal it before putting it in your trash. However, you should not dispose of CFLs or any mercury-containing device in your trash if it is destined for a waste incinerator as this increases the risk of mercury emissions to the environment. Ask your local waste management agency for specific guidance in this situation.

If these options are not available to you, it may be appropriate to save dead compact fluorescent light bulbs and wait for recycling opportunities to expand.

Businesses

Businesses are required to comply with Virginia's hazardous waste regulations when managing used fluorescent lamps. Additional information is available on DEQ's [waste](#) and [pollution prevention](#) websites.

In some cases, companies that recycle lights for businesses also may accept bulbs from homeowners for recycling. <http://www.deq.virginia.gov/info/lightbulbs.html>