



Environmental Health & Safety

WHAT TO DO WHEN COMPACT FLUORESCENTS [BULBS] BREAK

Compact fluorescent lamps contain small amounts of toxic mercury that can vaporize when the bulbs break, creating a potential health risk for infants, young children, and pregnant women. If a lamp does break, follow these clean-up procedures:

- Keep people and pets away. Open windows, and leave the area for 15 minutes before beginning the cleanup.
- Do not use a vacuum cleaner, even on a carpet. This will spread the mercury vapor and dust and potentially contaminate the vacuum.
- Wear rubber gloves.
- Carefully remove the larger pieces and place them in a secure closed container, preferably a glass jar with a metal screw top lid and seal like a canning jar.
- Next, scoop up the smaller pieces of paper such as index cards or playing cards.
- Pick up fine particles with duct tape, packing tape, or masking tape, and then use a wet wipe or damp paper towel.
- Put all waste into the glass container, including all material used in the cleanup. Remove the container from your home and call your local solid waste district or municipality for disposal instructions.
- Continue ventilating the room for several hours.
- Wash your hands and face.
- As a precaution, consider discarding throw rugs or the area of carpet where the breakage occurred, particularly if the rug is in an area frequented by infants, small children or pregnant women. Otherwise, open windows during the next several times you vacuum the carpet to provide good ventilation.



Source: Daley, Beth. "Mercury leaks found as new bulbs break." The Boston Globe
26 Feb. 2008, natl ed.: B2.

Questions? Call EHS at x 3882