

## MESSAGE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL GROUPS

We encourage members of environmental organizations to review the "[Message for all.doc.](#)"

### OVERVIEW

Environmental organizations can play a crucial role in promoting the recycling of lamps that contain mercury. Through your traditional role in education and outreach you can be very helpful in communicating to the public the dangers and health impacts of mercury pollution and the need to participate in lamp recycling programs.

### BASIC INFORMATION FOR ENVIRONMENTAL GROUPS

Mercury is an essential component of most energy-efficient lamps. Fluorescent light bulbs (including compact fluorescent) and high intensity discharge (HID) lamps are the two most common types of mercury-containing lamps. Fluorescent bulbs provide lighting to most schools, hospitals, office buildings and stores. HID lamps include mercury vapor lamps, metal halide and high-pressure sodium lamps, and are used for streetlights, floodlights, parking lots, and industrial lighting. Using efficient lighting technology helps our society reduce energy consumption. While the vast majority of mercury pollution comes from coal-fired power plants, releases from broken lamps also add to the mercury in lakes and rivers, which bio-accumulates in fish that is consumed by the public.

### WHAT CAN ENVIRONMENTAL GROUPS DO?

We urge you to use any of the materials in this CD-ROM and on the various websites in your ongoing educational programs to help raise awareness of this problem and its solution. In particular, we encourage you to promote the many links to state-by-state resource information, and the [www.lamprecycle.org](http://www.lamprecycle.org) and [www.almr.org](http://www.almr.org) websites.

We also encourage you to include mercury and lamp recycling when developing public policy initiatives at the federal and state level. Your input into these issues is extremely important. While our project is aimed primarily at businesses, which account for about 85% of the use of fluorescent lighting, households and individual consumers also need to be educated and informed about the safe handling of mercury containing light bulbs.

You can use the information in the following section to help inform households and individuals on how they can manage their lamps.

**MESSAGE FOR "HOUSEHOLD USERS"**

Homeowners can take advantage of local government household hazardous waste (HHW) collection programs to recycle their lamps. Household users of efficient mercury-containing fluorescent lamps, including compact fluorescents, are typically exempt from special disposal requirements. Some states and localities ban homeowners from disposing of such lamps in normal household trash. To review the State-by-State Stringency Comparison Table, see [Message re- State Stringency.doc](#) or contact your state or local government.

Recycling opportunities are available in many towns and cities, either at local recycling centers or transfer stations. There may also be household hazardous waste collection events where fluorescent lamps are collected along with household waste such as paints, pesticides, and used motor oil. Contact your local waste disposal officials for details.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has information on where to recycle lamps at <http://www.epa.gov/epaoswer/hazwaste/id/univwast/where.htm> including a link to Earth 911 that has recycling facilities listed by zip code.

The EPA also has information on the significant energy efficiency benefits of using compact fluorescent lamps at [http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=cfls.pr\\_cfls](http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=cfls.pr_cfls).

EPA has also published a Fact Sheet on Mercury in CFLs. We are presenting highlights here for your use.

### **Always Dispose of Your Compact Fluorescent Lamps (CFLs) Properly**

While CFLs for your home are not legally considered hazardous waste according to federal solid waste rules, it is still best for the environment to recycle your CFLs. Only large commercial users of tubular fluorescent lamps are required to recycle. If recycling is not an option in your area (see below on how to find out), place the CFL in a sealed plastic bag and dispose of it in the same way you would batteries, oil-based paint and motor oil at your local household hazardous waste collection site. To see if your state has a collection site for CFLs check Earth911.org or contact your local state government. If your state does not have a collection site, place the CFL in a sealed plastic bag and then place with your regular trash.

**Safe cleanup precautions:** If a CFL breaks in your home, close off the room to other parts of the building. Open a window to disperse any vapor that may escape, and leave the room for at least 15 minutes. Carefully

scoop up the fragments with a stiff paper (do not use your hands) and wipe the area with a disposable paper towel to remove all glass fragments. Do not use a vacuum as this disperses the mercury over a wider area. Place all fragments in a sealed plastic bag and follow disposal instructions, above.

### **Resources for Recycling or Proper Disposal of CFLs**

**NOTE:** Residential recycling programs are not yet available in most regions.

1. **Earth911.org**

<http://www.earth911.org/master.asp?s=ls&a=HHW&cat=9> (or call **1-800-CLEAN-UP** for an automated hotline): Online, enter your zip code, press “GO,” click “Household Hazardous Waste,” then “fluorescent light bulb disposal.” The site will identify your nearest residential mercury recycling facility or mail disposal method. If you find no specific information on CFL disposal, go back and click on the link for “Mercury Containing Items.”

2. **Call your local government** if the website and hotline number above does not have your local information. Look on the internet or in the phone book for your local or municipal government entity responsible for waste collection or household hazardous waste.

Environmental organizations are also encouraged to set up recycling programs for the spent mercury-containing lamps in your own facilities.

### **SETTING UP RECYCLING SERVICES**

Recycling services are provided by Association of Lighting and Mercury Recyclers (ALMR) member companies anywhere in the United States and its territories, Mexico and Canada. Services are available to large lamp users, small businesses, contractors, municipal government agencies and they are also available to households and the public through household waste collection programs. Either directly or through a network of transportation contractors, material can be picked up in any U.S. community. There are also a number of lighting, maintenance and other building contractors who will collect spent lamps and get them recycled for their customers.

Lamp collection programs can be designed for all generators:

- Small users can participate by using a “box program”, where a container is provided and when full it can be sent to any recycler via ground mail shipment. This is a prepaid program and labels and shipping papers are provided.

- For larger users, recyclers can arrange milk-run pick-ups and common carriers will transport lamps to accumulation facilities throughout the country, where they are consolidated for shipment to destination facilities.
- For very large generators, materials can be picked up in trailer loads as needed.
- There are numerous collection locations around the country that ship large quantities of lamps to recycling “Destination Facilities” (state authorized recyclers) every day.
- Recyclers typically provide customer services and containers, and will also arrange all aspects of getting lamps recycled for anyone who is interested.
- Individuals and small users can also take lamps to any locally operated household waste facility in their community. For a list of community programs see [www.earth911.org](http://www.earth911.org).

“Lamp Recycling. The Responsible Thing To Do.”©

For more information visit

[www.lamprecycle.org](http://www.lamprecycle.org)

or

[www.almr.org](http://www.almr.org)