

MESSAGE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

We encourage members of local government agencies to review the “[Message for All.doc](#).”

OVERVIEW

City and County Governments:

- Environmental Agencies
- Health Agencies
- Public Works Agencies
- Solid Waste Management Agencies
- Building, Inspection, Licensing and Permitting Agencies

Local government agencies throughout the country can contribute to the effort to increase mercury lamp recycling. Businesses and the public often contact their local government agencies first with questions about how to manage waste materials. Citizens may call and ask, “*I know I shouldn’t throw my _____ away, but what can I do?*” Local governments should be familiar with the regulations regarding mercury-lamp disposal, or at least be familiar with how to find these policies (for example, using the links contained in the state-specific pages included herein, see [State-by State Stringency Comparison Table](#)). Agencies can also direct people to collection spots or to local recyclers based in their area. Throughout the country there are more and more “green business” programs in which local agencies provide assistance to local businesses for stormwater management, refuse recycling, energy usage and efficiency, and contingency planning. Many agencies have cooperative agreements or Memoranda of Understanding with state regulators for implementation and/or enforcement of environmental policies and receive funding for these activities.

WHAT LOCAL AGENCIES CAN DO TO INCREASE LAMP RECYCLING:

Local governments can offer and advertise household hazardous waste (HHW) recycling programs for households as well as businesses. Collection services can also be made available for small businesses, in particular, those that qualify as Conditionally Exempt Small Quantity Generators (CESQGs). In order to make recycling more accessible, local governments can set up collection points, and hire local contractors or hazardous waste firms to recycle the spent lamps. If you have not already done so, we encourage you to feature any community programs at www.earth911.org.

Local agencies that do building inspections can add lamps to the checklist of compliance items. Start by asking the question, “What are you doing with your used mercury lamps?” Then, give them the information they need to set up a recycling program. See “[Message for Building Owners and Managers](#).”

There is a strong need to provide programs that divert spent lamps from municipal solid waste landfills. Solid waste franchise agencies can encourage or require solid waste contractors to set up active diversion programs. Agencies can require contractors to provide containers for spent lamps to customers. Once full, these can be shipped to recyclers. Containers are also available for anyone from any lamp recycling company.

Local governments can encourage participation in “green building” programs, energy-efficiency programs, lighting retrofits, and other programs which encourage the use of energy-efficient lighting and the recycling of spent lamps. Programs include:

- The Department of Energy’s Rebuild America
<http://www.rebuild.org/partnerships/business.asp>
- EPA’s Energy Star program (<http://www.energystar.gov>) and
- The U.S. Green Building Council (<http://www.usgbc.org>).

An Example of a Successful Local Program

This story is summarized from an actual program conducted by a local municipality and private businesses in Wisconsin in 2001-2004. It demonstrates that with a little effort and cooperation from local partners, mercury lamps can be diverted from the garbage and mercury can be kept out of the environment. Our source for this information is Jane Schlichting, Research Assistant, located at Superior Wastewater Treatment Plant (SWWTP) (715-394-0392), email: schlichtingj@ci.superior.wi.us. She may be contacted for advice on setting up similar programs in your area.

"Fluorescent Bulb Harvest" by Jane Schlichting

In an effort to reduce mercury releases to the environment as well as to Lake Superior, the City of Superior developed an effective program to encourage homeowners and small businesses to recycle fluorescent lamps. The program was sponsored by Superior Water Light and Power (SWLP) and Murphy Oil of Superior (M.O.). Modeled after a fluorescent lamp recycling program that Minnesota Power (Duluth, MN) developed, SWLP began providing coupons to their customers in their monthly billings to offset the partial cost of recycling lamps. SWLP also provided funding to help cover program costs. M.O. paid for coupons redeemed by county residents (each coupon was worth \$1). Head of the Lakes Electric Coop (HLEC) in Douglas County also became a participant in the program. HLEC provided coupons to their customers and encouraged recycling of fluorescent bulbs.

In addition, area Hardware Hank stores entered into an agreement with a commercial lamp recycler which provides recycling for both mercury thermostats and fluorescent bulbs. Homeowners and residents of Douglas County can bring fluorescent bulbs and

high intensity discharge lamps to the hardware stores and redeem the coupons which are provided by SWLP and HLEC.

The Lake Superior Alliance and City promoted this program through posters, press releases and advertising. Ads and coupons were placed in local media and were also available at local retail stores.

Now that a method of disposing of the fluorescent bulbs is established, the City of Superior passed an ordinance that bans the landfilling of compact and fluorescent bulbs. City and county residents are now required to recycle all fluorescent bulbs. Recycling these bulbs reduces the amount of mercury releases in Superior, and saves the city and county hauling expenses and landfill space. Results have far exceeded initial expectations. Over 5,000 bulbs have been recycled since the program has been in place. SWLP and M.O. have agreed to sponsor this program through 2004.

In conclusion, we encourage you to promote lamp recycling programs and to set up recycling programs for the spent mercury-containing lamps in your own facilities.

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

For more information visit
www.lamprecycle.org
or
www.almr.org