

## HOME &amp; GARDEN

## Compact fluorescent lights: A bright idea for your budget and the environment

Rebecca Blocker, MS

Housing & Environmental Design Specialist

[BlockerR@missouri.edu](mailto:BlockerR@missouri.edu)

Switching from incandescent bulbs to compact fluorescent lights (CFLs) is an easy way to save on your energy bill and help the environment.

ENERGY STAR-qualified CFLs use up to 75 percent less energy than incandescent bulbs. They cost more, but last up to 10 times longer and will save \$30 or more in electric costs over their lifetime.

### How do CFLs help the environment?

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) reports if every American home used just one CFL, it would save more than \$600 million in annual energy costs. This savings would be enough to light more than 3 million homes and would prevent release of greenhouse gases equivalent to emissions from 800,000 cars per year.

The main source of mercury emissions into our environment is from burning coal to produce electricity. Since CFLs use less electricity than incandescent bulbs, less mercury is released into the environment. Even though CFLs contain a small amount of mercury, it is significantly less than the mercury avoided by burning less coal.

### Are CFLs dangerous?

CFLs contain very small amounts of mercury, an average of 4 milligrams. By comparison, older thermometers contain about 500 milligrams. In the past year, CFL manufacturers have

reduced mercury in the lights to as low as 1.4 milligrams. No mercury is released unless the bulb is broken.

### What if a CFL breaks?

1. Open a window and leave the room for 15 minutes.
2. Scoop up the glass with a piece of cardboard. Then wipe the area with damp paper towel.
3. Do not vacuum. Use sticky tape to pick up glass fragments from carpeting.
4. Seal glass pieces and paper towel in two plastic bags. Follow disposal guidelines for hazardous wastes.

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### How do I dispose of CFLs?

The EPA recommends taking CFLs to a hazardous waste or recycling facility. Contact your solid waste agency for local recycling options.

The Home Depot and IKEA stores offer free consumer recycling for used, unbroken CFL bulbs. If no recycling facility is available, seal the bulb in two plastic bags and put it in your outside trash container. *Never incinerate fluorescent bulbs.*

### Where should I use CFLs?

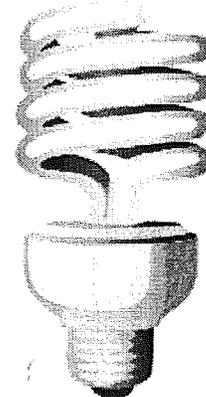
CFLs come in a variety of sizes, shapes and colors.

Special bulbs are available for dimmer and three-way switches. Read the package to find the right bulb. A 25-watt CFL will replace a 100-watt incandescent bulb.

CFLs are sensitive to frequent on-off switching and high temperatures. They will last longest where lights are on 15 minutes or more and in fixtures or lamps with good air flow. High humidity in bathrooms may shorten the life.

Some CFLs have less mercury and a longer life. ENERGY STAR bulbs meet strict standards and have a limited two-year warranty. If a bulb burns out early, contact the manufacturer on the base for refund information. In the future, save receipts to document date of purchase.

CFLs are one of the efficient lighting options available to help you make saving energy, saving money and saving the environment as easy as changing a light bulb.



### Resources:

ENERGY STAR, Compact Fluorescent Light Bulbs:  
[www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=cfls.pr\\_cfls](http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=cfls.pr_cfls)

Mo. Dept. of Natural Resources:  
1-800-361-4827  
[www.dnr.mo.gov/pubs/pub276.pdf](http://www.dnr.mo.gov/pubs/pub276.pdf)

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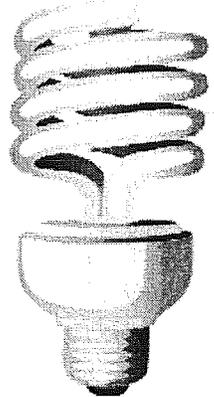
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