



LISA MADIGAN
ILLINOIS ATTORNEY GENERAL

COMPACT FLUORESCENT LIGHT BULBS

Why should I use Compact Fluorescent Light Bulbs (CFLs)?

Switching from incandescent light bulbs to CFLs is a simple yet effective step you can take to reduce your home energy use and its resulting greenhouse gas emissions.



What's the best way to maximize energy savings with CFL use?

To ensure maximum energy savings, replace incandescent bulbs with CFL bulbs in the areas of your home that are most frequently used, such as the living room, kitchen, or dining room.

How do I choose the right CFL for my light?

- Get the right wattage. Like incandescent bulbs, CFL bulbs come in a variety of wattages and lumens (light output). A typical 13-watt CFL bulb will provide the same amount of light as a 60-watt incandescent bulb. A 23-watt CFL bulb will produce the same amount of light as a 100-watt incandescent bulb.
- Use specially labeled CFL bulbs for outdoor fixtures, dimmable lights, or fixtures that are connected to a three-way switch.



What precautions should I take when using CFLs?

The remarkable efficiency of CFLs is owed to one critical component: mercury. While no mercury is released from a CFL when it is intact or in use, special care must be taken when handling and disposing of these bulbs. Always screw and unscrew the CFL by its base (not the glass), and never use excessive force or over tighten the CFL when replacing a bulb.

What should I do if a CFL breaks?

To safely clean up a broken CFL, the U.S. EPA recommends the following steps:

If a CFL breaks on a hard surface:

1. **Open a window and leave the room for at least 15 minutes.**
2. **Carefully scoop up the glass fragments and powder with stiff paper or cardboard and put them in a plastic bag.** Do not use bare hands to clean the area—use disposable rubber gloves, if available. Clean the soiled area with damp paper towels or disposable wet wipes and place them in the plastic bag. When you are finished cleaning, place the disposable gloves in the plastic bag and seal.
3. **Seal the cleanup materials in a second plastic bag.** Put the first sealed bag in a second plastic bag, seal it, and put it in the outdoor trash receptacle or other protected outdoor area for the next trash pick-up. Wash your hands after disposing of the bag. Note: Some states prohibit such trash disposal and require that broken and unbroken lamps be taken to a local recycling center.



If a CFL breaks on a rug or carpet:

1. Follow steps 1-2 above to remove everything you can without using a vacuum cleaner. Sticky tape (e.g., duct tape) may be used to pick up small pieces and powder.
2. If vacuuming is needed after all visible materials are removed, vacuum the area where the bulb was broken, remove the vacuum bag (or empty and wipe the canister), and put the bag or vacuum debris in two sealed plastic bags in the outdoor trash or protected outdoor location for disposal.

How do I dispose of a burned out CFL?

Here are some safe ways to dispose of a burned out CFL:

Recycling: When a CFL burns out, the best thing to do is recycle it. Discarded CFLs will eventually break, releasing mercury into the environment. Recycling these light bulbs reduces the chance that the mercury will be introduced into the environment.



In Chicago, take your burned out CFLs to the City's Household Products and Electronics Recycling Center, located at 1150 N. Branch. For more information, see the City's Household Hazardous Waste Web site at CityofChicago.org.

Household Disposal: If you plan to dispose of a CFL in your household garbage, seal the fluorescent light bulb in two plastic bags before putting it in the trash outside. If your waste hauler incinerates its garbage, please check for alternative options; you should never send a fluorescent light bulb or any other mercury-containing product to an incinerator.

Household Hazardous Waste Collection Events: For locations and dates, check the schedule of Illinois EPA sponsored household hazardous waste collections at www.epa.state.il.us/land/hazardous-waste/household-haz-waste/index.html or call 217-785-8604. Your local government may also sponsor household hazardous waste collections. Contact your local government for more information.

www.IllinoisAttorneyGeneral.gov

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