

# Help reduce mercury contamination!



*"We proudly recycle the fluorescents in all of our commercial buildings. Melvin Mark is committed to proper disposal of mercury-containing lamps and ballasts."*

Jim Mark, CEO  
Melvin Mark Companies

# Recycle fluorescent lamps and ballasts.

*"Recycling fluorescent light tubes is a simple and affordable practice that keeps mercury from contaminating our community. Bulb recycling is the responsible thing for businesses to do."*

Wade Lange, Property Manager  
Ashforth Pacific, Inc.

## Shedding light on fluorescent lamps

Fluorescent lighting is an excellent business and environmental choice because it is highly energy efficient. Unfortunately, in order to function properly, fluorescent lamps contain mercury, a toxic pollutant that persists in the environment and harms human health.

Mercury causes damage to the human brain, spinal cord, kidneys and liver. It is especially dangerous during fetal development and to small children. Any products containing mercury must be recycled to keep this dangerous element out of our environment.

When a lamp is broken or placed in a landfill or incinerator, mercury is released into the environment.

***The amount of mercury contained in just 25 standard fluorescent lamps can pollute a 20-acre lake, making the fish in the lake unsafe to eat.***

About 80% of all fluorescent lamps and tubes are used by commercial buildings. Several million of these are discarded each year, making these lamps one of the largest sources of mercury in Oregon's solid waste stream.

***Recycle. It's good for all of us.***

# How to recycle fluorescents in nine easy steps

- 1** Make sure responsible staff know the regulations and good management practices. If you are unsure about what is required of you, contact the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality at 503-229-5913.
- 2** Involve all relevant staff in the decision to recycle. Buy-in is important.
- 3** Choose a recycling firm. Your recycling firm will explain how to properly manage fluorescents prior to recycling, provide storage containers and transportation, and give you a certificate of recycling when the work is complete.
- 4** Store used lamps destined for recycling in the boxes that your light tubes originally came in so you don't have to purchase new boxes for shipping lamps.
- 5** Store lamps in a dry place where they won't be broken. Mark the boxes and area with the words: "Universal Waste-Lamps," "Waste Lamps," or "Used Lamps."
- 6** If lamps are accidentally broken, clean them up promptly and contain the shards (and any spilled powder) in a sealed plastic bag, plastic bucket, or sealed drum. Recycle these materials with your intact lamps.
- 7** Save any bills of lading or invoices that track your lamps and add the following information: shipment origination, shipment destination, date of shipment, and number of lamps.
- 8** Include the costs of recycling in your annual budget.
- 9** Let your tenants know that you've begun to recycle. They'll appreciate your concern for our environment!



## Recycle your fluorescents

As a commercial building owner or manager, you can recycle your fluorescent lamps and tubes.

All fluorescent bulbs contain mercury, including U-tubes, circular tubes, UVA bulbs, and compact fluorescent light bulbs. High Intensity Discharge (HID) and neon lighting also contain mercury.

## Choose low mercury alternatives

Another way to reduce the potential release of mercury into our environment is to use low mercury bulbs.

Most manufacturers produce bulbs with significantly less mercury content than the standard T12s and T8s.

***But remember, low mercury or not, all fluorescents must be recycled to protect human health.***

# Who recycles fluorescent light tubes?

*These firms pick up tubes all across Oregon and transport them to certified recycling facilities (or provide shipping containers).*

## **Earth Protection Services, Inc.**

Phoenix, AZ

800-414-0443 (headquarters)

503-620-2466 (local sales office)

[www.earthpro.com](http://www.earthpro.com)

## **EcoLights Northwest**

Seattle, WA

206-343-1247 (headquarters)

360-642-5410 (local sales office)

[www.ecolights.com](http://www.ecolights.com)

## **Environmental Protective Services**

McMinnville, OR (headquarters)

Brooks, OR (processing facility)

503-474-1586

[www.enviroprotective.com](http://www.enviroprotective.com)

## **North West Fire Fighters Environmental**

Philomath, OR

800-942-4614

[www.nwffenviro.com](http://www.nwffenviro.com)

## **ONYX Special Services, Inc.**

Phoenix, AZ

800-368-9095

602-415-3026 (local sales representative)

[www.onyxna.com](http://www.onyxna.com)

## **WasteXpress**

Portland, OR

503-224-3206

[www.wastexpressonline.com](http://www.wastexpressonline.com)

*For a complete list of lamp recycling vendors, visit:*  
[www.metrokc.gov/hazwaste/fluor/vendors.htm](http://www.metrokc.gov/hazwaste/fluor/vendors.htm)

## Average costs

The cost of recycling a fluorescent tube is between 6 and 10 cents per bulb foot.

***This cost represents just 1-2% of the lifetime costs of the bulb (purchase price plus energy costs).***

Some recycling firms will collect your bulbs for a pickup fee of between \$35 and \$50. You can also ship or hand-deliver your fluorescents.





## For more information

To learn more about properly managing mercury-containing lamps, contact:

**Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)**  
503-229-5913

Download DEQ's "Waste Lamps & Ballasts" fact sheet:  
[www.deq.state.or.us/wmc/hw/factsheets/WasteLampsBallasts.pdf](http://www.deq.state.or.us/wmc/hw/factsheets/WasteLampsBallasts.pdf)

**Metro Recycling Information** (Portland region)  
503-234-3000  
Monday through Saturday 8:30 AM - 5:00 PM  
[www.metro-region.org/recycling](http://www.metro-region.org/recycling)

Outside of metropolitan Portland, contact your county government or garbage disposal company.

# The Oregon Environmental Council

OEC was incorporated in 1968 as Oregon's first statewide environmental organization. A not-for-profit, nonpartisan organization with more than 2,000 members around the state, OEC has a proven track record of environmental innovation, including landmark programs such as Oregon's Bottle Bill, statewide land use planning, curbside recycling, pesticide right-to-know, and reduction of toxic mercury in consumer products.



*Clean air  
Clean water  
Clear thinking*

## Oregon Environmental Council

520 SW 6th Avenue, Suite 940  
Portland, Oregon 97204-1535  
503-222-1963  
[oec@orcouncil.org](mailto:oec@orcouncil.org)  
[www.orcouncil.org](http://www.orcouncil.org)

**Funding for this brochure was provided by the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, Metro, and the Spirit Mountain Community Fund.**

