

Fluorescent Lamp Recycling

Fluorescent lamps contain a small amount of mercury. An electric current passes through the lamp and vaporizes the mercury to generate light. Recycling fluorescent lamps protects human health and our environment from heavy metal contamination.

Fluorescent lamp recycling separates a number of materials for further use in new products.

- The mercury is reused in new lamps and other mercury devices.
- The glass is recycled into new lamps and other glass products.
- The aluminum end caps are shipped to an aluminum smelter to be transformed into new aluminum billets for making a variety of products.
- The phosphor powders that turn ultraviolet light into visible light are separated and cleaned for reuse in new lamps.



Types of lamps Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S) recycles:

- Circular and U-tube
- Compact Fluorescent
- Linear Tubes
- High Intensity Discharge (HID)
- High Pressure Sodium
- Mercury Vapor
- Metal Halide
- Neon
- Ultraviolet (UVA)

Packaging and Labeling

Place the fluorescent lamp in a cardboard box. Label the container as "Universal Waste – Lamps" and include the date upon the start of accumulation.

Disposal

Used fluorescent lamps must be disposed within 6 months of being generated by submitting a [Text a Pickup](#). Visit www.ehs.uci.edu.

Broken Lamp Spill Cleanup:

1. Do not throw broken or unbroken fluorescent lamps into the regular trash.
2. Open a window or door for cross ventilation and leave the area for 15 minutes.
3. Wear appropriate PPE. At a minimum, wear gloves appropriate for broken glass and safety glasses.
4. Take the usual precautions for collection of broken glass.
5. Cleanup residual powder with a suitable means (i.e. wet rag) that avoids dust and mercury vapor generation. If the lamp breaks on a carpeted area, sticky tape (such as duct tape) can be used to pick up small pieces of broken glass and powder. Do not vacuum with a household machine.
6. Place all cleanup materials in a plastic bag and seal. Place the plastic bag into a cardboard box.
7. Label the container as "Universal Waste – Lamps", include the date when the waste was first generated, and follow the disposal procedures listed above.
8. Wash your hands after disposing of the bag.

If at any time you feel the lamp breakage is too large to clean up, please contact your supervisor and call Environmental Health and Safety at (949)824-6200 for assistance.

Do not dispose of hazardous waste using sinks, drains, intentional evaporation, or as regular trash.