



Fluorescent Lighting Recycling & Disposal Options

Fluorescent lighting lamps (this includes bulbs, tubes and compact fluorescent lights – or CFLs) contain a small amount of **mercury**, sealed within the glass tubing. Mercury is an essential component of fluorescent lighting and is what allows the bulb to be an efficient light source. Unfortunately, when released into the environment, mercury can pose a hazard to human health or harm the environment and it is illegal to dispose of mercury-containing products in landfills.

Worn out fluorescent lamps should be properly **recycled** or disposed of using one of the options outlined below. Spent fluorescent lamps should **never** be disposed of in regular household trash. It is against the law in New Hampshire to dispose of any mercury-containing products in landfills, incinerators, or transfer stations. The New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) recommends that burned-out fluorescent lamps be recycled at local recycling facilities or retail stores if at all possible. If recycling is not an option, NHDES recommends that they be taken to a household hazardous waste collection site. These recommendations apply to recycling/disposal of all fluorescent lamps.

Recycling and Disposal Options:

1. Town Recycling Programs

Many towns accept fluorescent lamps on a year-round basis and many municipal household hazardous waste collection events accept lamps from homeowners. Please check with your local transfer station for recycling options. If they do not accept fluorescent lighting, they are required by law to provide you with options. Many household hazardous waste collection events also allow “out-of-towners” to bring fluorescent bulbs and tubes to their annual events, although they generally charge a fee. A [list of Household Hazardous Waste collection events](#) is available on the [NHDES Household Hazardous Waste webpage](#).

2. Home Depot, Lowe’s and Aubuchon Hardware Stores

Home Depot and Lowe’s will accept and recycle Compact Fluorescent Lamps (CFLs) only, and recycle them at no cost to the consumer. Aubuchon Hardware stores will accept and recycle fluorescent lamps on a “buy one; recycle one” basis. Contact your local hardware stores since not all will offer this service.

3. Self-Transport to Recycling Facilities

Homeowners and businesses may transport their fluorescent lamps directly to a recycler. Lamps must be transported in such a manner as to prevent breakage and in proper containers that prevent any loss of mercury to the environment, if breakage does occur. A [list that includes two recyclers](#) located in New Hampshire is available on the NHDES website. [Batteries Plus stores](#) may also accept lamps for recycling.

4. Professional Fluorescent Lamp Transporters

Businesses and homeowners can call for a pick up by either the recycling facility or one of several transporters. Most lamp recycling facilities can provide the name of “lamp pick-up” services that bring

lamps to their recycling facility. This is convenient but may involve either a minimum transportation charge or minimum number of lamps. The collector may be willing to accept a small number of these items if you meet them at a business location where they are picking up a large number of lamps.

5. Lamp Recycling Kits

These kits consist of a properly constructed box that once filled with spent lamps is mailed to an approved recycling facility via common carrier. The purchase cost of the kit includes the shipping charge and recycling fee. This is extremely convenient but costs about twice as much per lamp than recycling directly with the facility. Most fluorescent lamp recyclers provide mailing kits.

6. Give Lamps to a Neighbor

Finally, if you are a homeowner moving from your home or have to quickly “get rid” of your lamps or other unwanted household hazardous waste materials, give them to a neighbor who can hold on to the lamps or materials and bring them to the town’s household hazardous waste collection event.

By law, businesses must manage spent fluorescent lamps as either a hazardous or universal waste. Although the above-listed options may be available to them at no cost, businesses should keep a record of mercury-added devices they recycle.



For more information, contact the New Hampshire Pollution Prevention Program at (603) 271-6460 or nhppp@des.nh.gov.