

Frequently Asked Questions About Compact Fluorescent Light Bulbs!

Q – What is a compact fluorescent light bulb?

A – A compact fluorescent light bulb, or CFL, is an energy-efficient bulb that can replace many standard incandescent bulbs. They last 10 times longer, use 75% less energy, and will save you money on your electric bill.



Q – Where can I use them?

A – You can use CFLs to replace many of your incandescent bulbs in your home. CFLs come with standard screw-in bases, as well as candelabra bases for many decorative models. There are a variety of shapes, sizes, and wattages to meet your needs and tastes.

Q – Are they dimmable?

A – Unless it specifically states on the package that it is dimmable, then the answer is NO!

Q – I don't like the color of light that comes out of CFL's. What are my options?

A – CFLs come in a variety of color temperatures, ranging from 2700K to 3500K. The lower the temperature, the "warmer" the color (e.g. yellow). The higher the temperature, the "cooler" the color (e.g. blue).

Q – Can they be used in ceiling fans?

A – There are specific CFLs for ceiling fans, and we recommend using those designed for this application.

Q – Can I use them outside?

A – You can use them in enclosed fixtures outside, but CFLs should not be used in exposed fixtures outdoors.

Q – I heard there's mercury in the compact fluorescent light bulbs I'm being encouraged to use. Is that true?

Yes. CFLs contain a very small amount of mercury sealed within the glass tubing. Mercury is an essential element in CFLs and is what allows the bulb to be an efficient light source. There is currently no substitute for mercury in CFLs.

Q – How much mercury (HG) is in a CFL?

A - ← see that dot? That is how much mercury is in a CFL. In fact, manufacturers have set voluntary limits of 5 mg per bulb. By comparison, older home thermometers contain between 500 mg and 1,000 mg of mercury, and many manual thermostats contain up to 3,000 mg.

Q – If they have mercury, how are they better for the environment?

A -- Utility power plants burn fossil fuels to generate electricity needed to run things in your home like light bulbs. Fossil fuels – primarily coal – contain mercury, which is released into the air when they are burned. Coal-fired power generation accounts for roughly 40% of the mercury emissions in the United States.



Using light bulbs that are more energy-efficient, like CFLs, require less electricity to be generated by power plants, thereby reducing the plants' mercury emissions. A coal-fired power plant will emit close to 15 milligrams of mercury to produce the electricity required to run an incandescent light bulb, compared to less than 5 for a CFL.

Airborne mercury poses a very low risk of exposure. However, when mercury emissions deposit into lakes and oceans, they can transform into a highly toxic form that builds up in fish, which is the most common pathway for human exposure to mercury.

Q – How do I dispose of them?

A – You can bring them to your local hazardous waste collection day, just like you would with your used batteries or household chemicals. Or, you can visit www.sylvania.com/recycle to order pre-labeled recycling kits.

Q – Can CFL's be recycled?

A – SYLVANIA has joined forces with Veolia Environmental Services to provide environmentally responsible recycling alternatives. The Consumer **RECYCLEPAK** CFL and Mixed Lamps kit holds hold up to 15 small compact fluorescent lamps and 6-8 medium to large compact fluorescent lamps. Consumers can purchase these for \$15 on SYLVANIA.com.

Q – Will the mercury get into my home?

A - Not unless the bulb is broken. The mercury is contained within the glass tube and will not be released unless the bulb is broken.

Q – What happens if I break one in my home?

The US EPA's Mercury Spill Site <http://www.epa.gov/mercury/spills/index.htm> recommends:

- Open a window and leave the room for 15 minutes
- Pick up all pieces you can without a vacuum cleaner and place in a sealable plastic bag
- Place all cleanup materials in a second sealable plastic bag
- Wash your hands
- The first time you vacuum the area where the bulb was broken, remove the vacuum bag once done cleaning the area (or empty and wipe the canister) and put the bag and/or vacuum debris, as well as the cleaning materials, in two sealed plastic bags in the outdoor trash or protected outdoor location for normal disposal.

