

# Compact Fluorescent Light Bulbs— A Good Choice for Your Home.

Compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs) use less energy and reduce landfill waste. Compared to a conventional bulb a CFL uses approximately 75 percent less energy, saving more than \$30 over its lifetime and lasts six to 10 times longer.

All fluorescent bulbs require trace amounts of mercury, a toxic metal, to work and it is important they be disposed of correctly. The amount of mercury in a CFL is extremely small—about the size of the period at the end of this sentence—and does not pose a direct health risk when handled properly.

Mercury occurs naturally in the environment and is used in many household items, including thermostats, thermometers and batteries, as well as switches for appliances, lights and automobiles. People primarily are exposed to mercury by eating contaminated fish.

## Residential CFL disposal options.

Although it's legal to throw away CFL bulbs in the trash, Fort Collins Utilities recommends they be recycled. Several local hardware stores and retailers offer free CFL recycling. Locations are listed at [fcgov.com/cfl](http://fcgov.com/cfl).



*CFLs are safe to use in your home—no mercury is released when the bulbs are in use.*

Unbroken CFL bulbs and other mercury-containing devices also may be taken to the Larimer County Landfill Hazardous Waste Collection Facility, 5887 S. Taft Hill Rd. ([co.larimer.co.us/solidwaste/haz.htm](http://co.larimer.co.us/solidwaste/haz.htm)), (970) 498-5773).

## Recycle your CFLs.

- Enclose unbroken CFL bulb in a sealed plastic bag to reduce the risk of bulb breakage.
- Drop off at a participating Fort Collins store.

## Cleaning up a broken CFL.

If a CFL bulb breaks, your greatest risk is being cut from the glass rather than exposure to the mercury. To minimize risk even further:

- Open a window or outside door and leave the room for 5–10 minutes.
- Shut off your central air-conditioning or heating system.
- Carefully scoop up glass fragments and powder using stiff paper or cardboard and place all associated debris in a glass container with a lid or sealable plastic bag.
- Instead of sweeping, use sticky tape to pick up remaining glass fragments, then wipe the area clean with damp paper towels. Place all debris in the jar or bag.
- Limit vacuuming when possible. If you must vacuum, use the hose and throw away the bag.
- Store all bulb debris in a protected outside area until you take it to a participating Fort Collins recycling retailer.

Details at [epa.gov/cfl/cflcleanup.html](http://epa.gov/cfl/cflcleanup.html).

## Disposal options for commercial fluorescent lights.

Different regulations apply to commercial fluorescent lighting. According to the federal Universal Waste Rule, fluorescent bulbs used in businesses must be recycled or treated as hazardous waste and are not accepted at landfills with regular trash.

There are various recycling options, including pre-paid recycling boxes and on-site pickup. The Larimer County Landfill provides a fee-based recycling option for Conditionally Exempt Small Quantity Generators of waste. Contact the landfill to see if your business qualifies.

## Other recycling opportunities.

Learn more about recycling in Fort Collins at [fcgov.com/green](http://fcgov.com/green).



[fcgov.com/cfl](http://fcgov.com/cfl) • [utilities@fcgov.com](mailto:utilities@fcgov.com)  
(970) 221-6700 • TDD: (970) 224-6003

## When Your CFL Burns Out or Breaks.



## Residential Recycling and Disposal Guidelines.



Fort Collins Conserves. A Year-Round Activity.

2/12



Fort Collins Conserves. A Year-Round Activity.