

# How to Properly Clean up and Dispose of a Broken CFL

## Steps to Protect You, Your Family, and the Environment

Compact fluorescent light bulbs contain a small amount of mercury sealed within the glass tubing. When a fluorescent bulb breaks, this mercury is released as vapor. Follow the steps below to reduce mercury contamination of your home and the environment.

### Before Cleanup

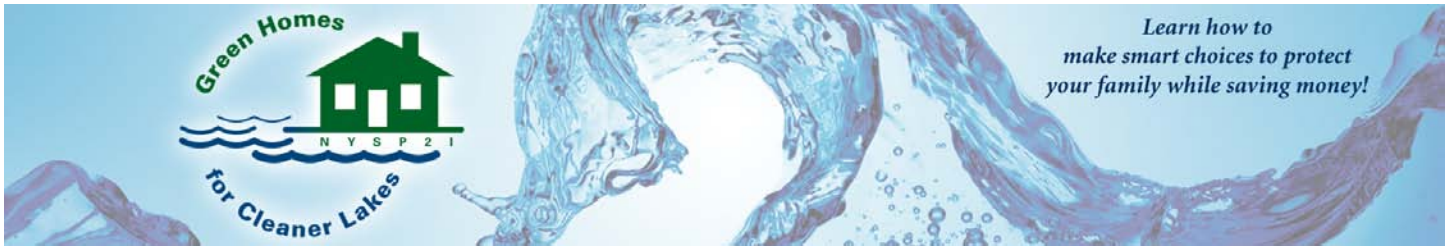
1. Have people and pets leave the room.
2. Air out the room for 5-10 minutes by opening a window or door to the outdoor environment.
3. Shut off the central forced air heating/air-conditioning system, if you have one.
4. Collect materials needed to clean up broken bulb: stiff paper or cardboard, sticky tape, damp paper towels or disposable wet wipes (for hard surfaces), and a glass jar with a metal lid or a sealable plastic bag.

### During Cleanup

5. Carefully scoop up glass fragments and powder using stiff paper or cardboard and place debris and paper/cardboard in a glass jar with a metal lid. If a glass jar is not available, use a sealable plastic bag. (NOTE: Since a plastic bag will not prevent the mercury vapor from escaping, remove the plastic bag(s) from the home after cleanup.)
6. Use sticky tape, such as duct tape, to pick up any remaining small glass fragments and powder. Place the used tape in the glass jar or plastic bag.
7. Clean the surfaces. For hard surfaces, wipe the area clean with damp paper towels or disposable wet wipes. Place the towels in the glass jar or plastic bag. Vacuuming of hard surfaces, carpeting, or rugs during cleanup is not recommended unless broken glass remains after all other cleanup steps have been taken. [NOTE: It is possible that vacuuming could spread mercury-containing powder or mercury vapor, although available information on this problem is limited.] If vacuuming is needed to ensure removal of all broken glass, keep the following tips in mind:
  - o Keep a window or door to the outdoors open;
  - o Vacuum the area where the bulb was broken using the vacuum hose, if available; and
  - o Remove the vacuum bag (or empty and wipe the canister) and seal the bag/vacuum debris, and any materials used to clean the vacuum, in a plastic bag.

### After Cleanup

8. Promptly place all bulb debris and cleanup materials, including vacuum cleaner bags, outdoors in a trash container or protected area until materials can be disposed of. Avoid leaving any bulb fragments or cleanup materials indoors.
9. Next, check with your local government about disposal requirements in your area, because some localities require fluorescent bulbs (broken or unbroken) be taken to a local recycling center. If there is no such requirement in your area, you can dispose of the materials with your household trash.
10. Wash your hands with soap and water after disposing of the bulb debris and cleanup materials.
11. Continue to air out the room where the bulb was broken and leave the H&AC system shut off, as practical, for several hours.



# How to Properly Dispose of CFLs and Pharmaceuticals

## Steps to Protect You, Your Family, and the Environment

**Compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs)** contain a small amount of mercury sealed within the glass tubing. When a bulb breaks, this mercury is released as vapor. Recycling CFLs reduces the potential for mercury to contaminate your home or the environment.

### Correct Disposal Methods

- ✓ Drop off your CFL at a retailer for recycling. Home Depot, Lowe's, and others accept CFLs.
- ✓ Use pre-labeled recycling kits available from some bulb manufacturers that allow you to mail used bulbs to recycling centers.
- ✓ Visit Earth911.com to find collection schedules & drop off locations in your area.
- ✓ Check with your local household hazardous waste disposal facility. Many accept CFLs.

### Incorrect Disposal Methods

- ✗ Thrown in the trash. CFLs typically break, releasing mercury which can contaminate the air in your home and the environment.

**Pharmaceutical waste** is any drug that is outdated or unused, including prescription medication (non controlled and controlled substances), over the counter (OTC) medications, vitamins, nutritional supplements, and veterinary medications.

### Correct Disposal Methods

- ✓ Drop off pharmaceuticals at collection events where drugs are properly destroyed via incineration.
- ✓ Check with your local household hazardous waste disposal facility. Many collect pharmaceuticals or host collections.
- ✓ Check with your pharmacy. Many pharmacies collect unwanted pharmaceuticals for proper disposal.
- ✓ Place in the trash, after making the medication undesirable & sealing the container:
  - Remove medicines from original containers and mix them with something undesirable like coffee grounds
  - Seal the container & place in the trash

### Incorrect Disposal Methods

- ✗ Flush down toilets or put in drains, as the pharmaceuticals contaminate our waterways as water treatment plants can't remove them.
- ✗ Open containers thrown into the trash where pharmaceuticals in landfills may leach and contaminate our waterways.



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