



## How to Clean Up Broken CFLs and Other Mercury-containing Lamps and Tubes

### Households or Small Amounts of Breakage

**Most “energy-efficient” lighting is hazardous when broken because it contains mercury.**

- Fluorescent tubes, including low mercury tubes.
- Compact fluorescents, including low mercury lamps.
- High Intensity Discharge (HID) lamps
- Metal halide lamps, such as floodlights for large indoor and outdoor areas and gymnasiums.
- Sodium lamps, such as those sometimes used as security lighting and outdoor floodlights.
- Mercury vapor lamps, such as those sometimes used for street lighting

Mercury is present in the white powder “phosphor” coating inside the tube or bulb and also as a vapor within the intact tube or bulb. Although any single tube or bulb contains only a very small amount of mercury, it is important to follow these simple cleanup directions to prevent contamination of your home and environment.

In a household or for small quantity breakages, **do not use a standard vacuum cleaner!** Do not use ordinary residential and commercial floor vacuums, floor vacuums that trap dirt with water, or wet/dry shop vacuums. (For vacuum cleaning, only vacuums designed and approved specifically for hazardous waste may be used.)

**Instead of vacuuming**, wear latex gloves and carefully clean up the fragments. Wipe the area with a damp disposable paper towel to remove all glass fragments and associated mercury.

Keep all people and pets away from the area being cleaned so that mercury-containing pieces and powder are not tracked into other areas.

Keep the area well ventilated during clean-up and for an additional half hour to disperse any mercury vapor that may have escaped.

After clean up is complete, place all fragments along with cleaning materials and gloves into a sealable (“zip-lock”) plastic bag. Use a permanent pen to mark the bag “Mercury Lamp Accidental Breakage.” Take the bag with intact lamps for recycling.

**Do not eat, drink, or smoke during clean-up or until after removing gloves and washing hands.**

*Adapted from Calif Integrated Waste Mgmt Board website: [www.ciwmb.ca.gov/WPIE/FluoresLamps/#CleanBreak](http://www.ciwmb.ca.gov/WPIE/FluoresLamps/#CleanBreak)*

