

# Basic Information about Recycling Mercury-Containing Light Bulbs



## What is mercury?

Mercury is a toxic metal that can cause severe damage to major organs and the central nervous system. The form of mercury most commonly found in homes is a heavy, odorless, silver-colored liquid. This is found in light bulbs, thermometers, thermostats, and switches in appliances (such as chest freezers).

## Mercury-containing light bulbs include:

- fluorescent bulbs, including compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs);
- high intensity discharge (HID) bulbs, which include mercury vapor bulbs, metal halide and high-pressure sodium bulbs, and are used for streetlights, floodlights, parking lots, and industrial lighting



## Why use fluorescent bulbs if they contain mercury?

Fluorescents are significantly more energy-efficient than incandescent bulbs because they require less energy to provide lighting. Electrical generation from coal-burning power plants also releases mercury into the environment. The use of fluorescent bulbs in place of incandescent bulbs lowers energy use and thus reduces the associated release of mercury from many power plants. Fluorescent bulbs are also more cost effective because they last up to 10 times longer than incandescent bulbs.

## Why recycle?

The amount of mercury in a fluorescent lamp ranges between 3.5 to 15 milligrams. Although lighting manufacturers have greatly reduced the amount of mercury used in lighting over the past 20 years, they are not yet able to completely eliminate the need for mercury. Millions of mercury-containing lamps are sold in the United States each year, and most are improperly discarded. Although the amount of mercury in a single fluorescent lamp is small, collectively, large numbers of fluorescent lamps contribute to the amount of mercury that is released into the environment.

## Recycling prevents the release of mercury into the environment.

Fluorescent and other mercury-containing bulbs often break when thrown into a dumpster, trash can or compactor, or when they end up in a landfill or incinerator. To prevent the release of mercury, these bulbs should be taken to a recycler before they break. Recyclers recover the mercury and other components for reuse.

**For more information on disposal of mercury-containing materials, contact the DMASWA Regional Collection Center at 563-589-1720 or the DMASWA Education Office at 563-588-7933.**

# CFL Drop Off Recycling



Compact Fluorescent Lights (CFLs) are among the most efficient light bulbs available today. And it's never been easier to make the switch from a regular light bulb to a CFL! ENERGY STAR-qualified CFLs use 60% less electricity than regular bulbs and come in a wide variety of styles and sizes. By reducing your electricity use you save money – up to \$45 over the seven-year average life of the CFL.

RECYCLE your CFL when it burns out. This is an important part of saving energy and protecting the environment. The Dubuque Metropolitan Area Solid Waste Agency has begun a FREE program for Dubuque county residents to recycle used CFLs. Residents should bring their old, unbroken CFLs in sealed zip-lock bags to one of the drop-off locations listed below during their business hours. For more information contact the Solid Waste Education Office at 563-588-7933.

## Dubuque County Locations:

**Dubuque City Hall**, 50 W 13th Street, Dubuque, Phone: 563-589-4120  
**City of Dubuque Leisure Services Office**, 2200 Bunker Hill, Dubuque, Phone: 563-589-4263  
**Keyline Transit Office**, 2401 Central Avenue, Dubuque, Phone: 563-589-4196  
**Municipal Services Center**, 925 Kerper Court, Dubuque, Phone: 563-589-4250  
**DMASWA Landfill**, 14501 Highway 20 W, Dubuque, Phone: 563-557-8220  
**Dubuque County Conservation Board Office**, 13606 Swiss Valley Rd., Peosta, Phone: 563-556-6745  
**Dubuque County Health/Zoning Department**, 13063 Seippel Road, Dubuque, Phone: 563-557-7396  
**Cascade City Hall**, 320 1st Avenue W, Cascade Phone: 563-852-3114,  
**Dyersville City Hall**, 340 1st Ave E, Dyersville, Phone: 563-875-7724  
**Luxemburg City Hall**, 202 South Anders St., Luxemburg, Phone: 563-853-4615  
**Premier Bank Locations**, Phone: 556-588-1000  
2625 NW Arterial, 1975 JFK Rd., 140 W 9th Street, Dubuque  
**Dubuque County Library Branches**, Phone: 563-582-0008  
5900 Saratoga Plaza, Suite 5, Asbury;  
110 Bierman Road SE, Epworth  
205 First Street NE, Farley  
938 First Street, Holy Cross

## Delaware County Locations:

**Earlville City Hall**, 12 Southside Road, Earlville, Phone: 563-923-3365  
**Edgewood City Hall**, 203 West Union St., Edgewood, Phone: 563-928-6842  
**Hopkinton City Hall**, 115 First Street, SE, Hopkinton, Phone: 563-926-2181

## Clayton County Location:

**Strawberry Point City Hall**, 111 Commercial Street, Strawberry Point, 563-933-4482

