

Handling and Disposal of Discarded or Broken Mercury-containing Lamps

Management and disposal of discarded and broken mercury-containing lamps (i.e., bulbs or tubes) are regulated by federal and state regulations; therefore, great care must be exercised in handling, storage, and disposal of these items. The following procedures should be executed by personnel handling discarded or broken mercury-containing lamps:

Discarded, Unbroken Mercury-containing Lamps

- Place unbroken lamps in structurally sound drums, boxes, or cartons designed to minimize lamp breakage. (The manufacturer's original shipping container may be acceptable.)
- Clearly mark or label containers with one of the following phrases: "Universal Waste – Lamps," or "Used Lamps," or "Waste Lamps."
- Mark containers with the date when lamps are first added to the container.
- Store containers in a dry location, protected from crushing and impacts that could break lamps.
- Keep containers securely closed except when adding or removing lamps.
- Transfer closed, labeled, and dated containers of discarded lamps to the Universal Waste Storage Area for recycling.

Broken Mercury-containing Lamps

- Ask all personnel to leave the immediate area of a freshly broken lamp and allow the area to ventilate thoroughly for 5 to 10 minutes before cleaning up the debris.

If several lamps are broken in the same area, it may be necessary to evacuate all personnel, shut down air handlers, and request professional assistance to clean up the debris. Contact Environmental Health and Safety at 678-2044, 678-2740, or 678-4672 for assistance.

- Don disposable gloves and use stiff paper or similar disposable material to scoop up the debris, being careful not to touch the debris or cause it to become airborne.

Never use a vacuum cleaner to clean up debris from a mercury-containing lamp.

- Pick up remaining debris with sticky tape.
- Place all debris and contaminated equipment (e.g., disposable gloves) in a structurally sound container, and seal the container tightly. (Jars or buckets with tight-fitting lids or "Ziploc" bags inside a rigid container are acceptable for this purpose.)
- Label the container with one of the following phrases "Universal Waste – Lamps," or "Used Lamps," or "Waste Lamps" and the date when debris was first added to the container.
- Transfer the closed, labeled, dated container to the Universal Waste Storage Area for recycling.
- Wash your hands with soap and water after cleaning up mercury spill debris and/or handling containers of such debris.

Contact Environmental Health and Safety for additional guidance or assistance.

Examples of Mercury-Containing Lamps

Fluorescent Tubes – Straight/Linear

Includes all diameters and light outputs in a straight/linear configuration.



Fluorescent Tubes – Curved/Circular

Includes all diameters and light outputs in a curved/circular configuration (curved, square, U, etc.)



UV and Germicidal Lamps

UV or germicidal lamps of all shapes and sizes; all base types including pin-type, screw, etc.



Compact Fluorescent Lamps (CFLs)

Compact fluorescent lamps are typically similar in size and intended to replace an incandescent (traditional) light bulb.



High Intensity Discharge (HID) and Other

Includes all HID technologies, such as high pressure sodium, low pressure sodium, mercury vapor, and metal halide. These lamps vary in size, but are much larger than a typical bulb. In some cases, they can be as big, or bigger, than a football.

