

FLUORESCENT LIGHT BULBS

Our environment is being significantly damaged due to large amounts of dangerous emissions being released into the atmosphere from human activities. It is up to everyone to help reduce such problems and therefore it is important that we become more informed about how to be more energy efficient.

Lighting currently represents approximately 25% of household energy but is also the easiest to control. As with most household energy use, standard lighting produces greenhouse gases through the burning of coal which produces carbon dioxide. In NSW alone, carbon dioxide emissions are equivalent to 18 tonnes for every person in the state (SEDA).

Fluorescent light bulbs are much more energy efficient than traditional incandescent bulbs and only use one quarter of the energy. As well as helping to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions, using fluorescent light bulbs lower energy costs and last up to ten times longer than regular light bulbs, therefore reducing our waste levels.

Fluorescent light bulbs contain small quantities of mercury, cadmium and antimony and in most cases are considered to be hazardous waste when disposed. Mercury is a metal that accumulates in living tissue and cause illness or death in humans. When a lamp is broken or placed in a landfill, the mercury can contaminate the air, surface water and ground water.

WHAT CAN I DO?

Installing just one compact fluorescent light bulb can save up to \$50 on your energy bills and half a tonne of greenhouse gas over the bulb's lifetime (SEDA). Compact fluorescent light bulbs do cost more than the older incandescent models, but can last up to 10 000 hours, not needing to be replaced nearly as often. They are widely available and can be purchased in the lighting section of most supermarkets. Fitting the majority of light fittings, fluorescent bulbs are ideal for

rooms where lighting is required for long periods of time, such as the living room or kitchen.

When it is time to dispose of your fluorescent light bulbs, ensure they are disposed of in the correct manner. Containing hazardous substances, it is best to contact your council to find out about hazardous waste collections in your area. Ensure they are transported carefully.

MORE INFORMATION

- www.deus.nsw.gov.au - Sustainable Energy Development Authority
- www.lamprecyclers.com.au - A company that specializes in recycling fluorescent light bulbs.
- www.greenhouse.gov.au/education/cfls.html

A question and answer guide about changing to compact fluorescent light bulbs.