

SAFETY ALERT

November 15, 2022

Fluorescent Light Bulb Storage and Disposal

Hazards: Mercury Exposure, Improper Disposal of Universal Waste, Broken Glass

A typical fluorescent light bulb is composed of a phosphor-coated glass tube. The phosphor contains mercury, a toxic chemical. Fluorescent light bulbs must be adequately stored to prevent breakage resulting in release of phosphor and broken glass. When a fluorescent lamp burns out or is no longer needed, it is regulated in the State of California as a “Universal Waste” and must be properly disposed of.

To properly store fluorescent light bulbs that are still usable:

1. Keep bulbs stored in the original packaging that they were delivered in.
2. If the original packaging is no longer available, store the bulbs in a commercially available cardboard drum or box that will protect the bulbs from damage.
3. Ensure the storage box or drum is clearly identified that the bulbs are still “in use”.
4. Situate the storage container in a location where it will not get crushed or fall over.

*To properly dispose spent **unbroken** fluorescent light bulbs at LBNL:*

1. Place the spent lamp in a secure location where it will not get broken.
2. Place a Facilities Work Order request through the [Facilities General Work Request Center](#) website and arrange for pick-up.
3. Place a completed “Universal Waste” label on the bulb. Contact the ETA Safety Manager if labels are needed.
4. Facilities will come to your location and pick-up the light bulb for disposal free of charge.
5. Do not place fluorescent light bulbs in the regular trash or recycling bins.

*In the event that a fluorescent light bulb is **broken** in your work area:*

1. Keep personnel away from the phosphor powder and broken glass so that it is not tracked through the area.
2. Keep the area well ventilated to disperse any vapor that may escape.
3. If the powder is becoming tracked through the area or injuries have occurred from broken glass, also call **X6999** for assistance.
4. A broken bulb can be cleaned-up if you have the proper equipment available:
 - a. Wear latex or nitrile gloves
 - b. Carefully clean up the glass fragments. Use tongs if possible.
 - c. DO NOT vacuum. Vacuuming may disperse the mercury vapors into the air.
 - d. Wipe the affected area with a damp disposable paper towel to pick-up any

- phosphor or small glass pieces.
- e. Place all fragments and cleanup materials including gloves into a sealable plastic bag.
 - f. Label the plastic bag with a red hazardous waste label and place it into the nearest hazardous waste Satellite Accumulation Area (SAA).
 - g. A hazardous waste requisition will need to be submitted to Waste Management to arrange for pick-up and disposal.
5. For large amounts of breakage, such as a case or pallet of bulbs, do not attempt to clean up. Secure the area and call **X6999** for assistance.

If you have any questions, please contact the ETA Safety Manager, Ron Scholtz at X8137.



Storage Drum



UNIVERSAL WASTE	
GENERATOR INFORMATION (Optional)	
SHIPPER	_____
ADDRESS	_____
CITY, STATE, ZIP	_____
CONTENTS	_____

ACCUMULATION START DATE _____	
UNIVERSAL WASTE	

Universal Waste Label