

# Recycling Dangerous Lights, Lamps and Bulbs

## New changes announced for disposal of certain light bulbs

Some of the light bulbs we use at home and business are now considered “Dangerous Waste Lamps.” These lamps should now be disposed of at a licensed, hazardous waste facility.

### What are dangerous waste lamps?

Universal waste categories of lamps include:

- Fluorescent tubes
- High density (HID) lamps (mercury vapor, metal halide, high pressure sodium)
- Compact fluorescent
- Neon lamps (some may be manufactured with mercury and phosphor powder)



### Why the concern?

The material used to make these lamps is hazardous to human health and the environment. When broken, fluorescent tubes release mercury in vapor form. Some lamps contain lead in the glass and lead solder used in the lamp base. Fortunately, manufacturers are beginning to eliminate the lead by using unleaded glass and solders in newer lamps.

600 million lamps are disposed of annually nationwide, mostly to solid waste disposal facilities, including landfills and solid waste incinerators. While lead is slowly being phased out, mercury is still a great concern.

- The average mercury content in a fluorescent tube manufactured in 1999 is approximately 12 milligrams.
- Fluorescent tubes manufactured prior to 1999 can have 15-50 milligrams of mercury.
- High intensity discharge lamps may contain up to 250 milligrams, depending on the lamp wattage.

### Why are mercury and lead a problem?

When the lamps break during disposal, mercury vapor is released potentially exposing solid waste handlers to inhalation of those vapors. Mercury that makes it way into the atmosphere is eventually deposited back to the earth.

Lead is a toxic metal that may leach from solid waste landfills into the ground water.

### Health & environmental hazards resulting from mercury

- Health risk from inhalation or absorption can cause neurological (brain) disorders
- It is persistent and toxic in our environmental
- It is bioaccumulative (passed on through the food chain) and a threat to human health



## How do I know if a lamp is dangerous waste?

Read the packaging or manufacturer's information. If it is currently in use and unidentifiable, assume that it is. Compact and standard fluorescent tubes, high-density (HID) lamps, and neon lamps are all dangerous waste.

Lamps identified as "Green" and marked with a green band or end cap (see picture) have been manufactured with less mercury and are eligible for disposal in a Municipal Solid Waste landfill, however, recycling is recommended over disposal.



**Example of a low mercury fluorescent tube.**

## Should fluorescent lamps still be used?

Absolutely, they are much more energy efficient than incandescent bulbs. By comparison, fluorescent tubes use one-quarter of the energy, provide the same amount of light, and last about ten times longer than incandescent bulbs. Compact fluorescent bulbs last even longer. Savings on energy conservation are realized in applications where lighting is used continuously, such as street areas, playfields, and parking lots. Using less energy helps to reduce mercury emissions from fossil fuel burning power plants, and conserves stored energy created by local hydro and wind power.

## Where do I take these lamps or tubes for disposal?

Bring them to the Benton County Moderate Risk Waste Facility at the Richland Landfill, 3102 Twin Bridges Road. Business hours are Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The facility is closed on Holidays. Please make every effort to protect them from breaking. Wrap securely or place in a sturdy container.

## Is there a maximum number of bulbs the Benton County Moderate Risk Waste Facility will accept from *businesses*?

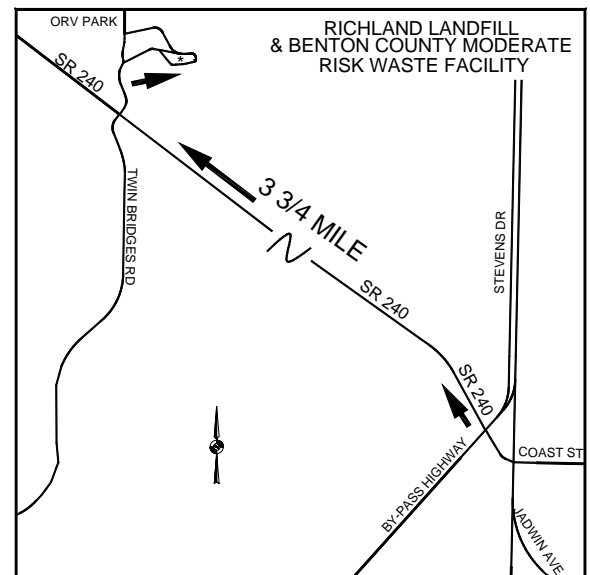
Yes. The facility will accept up to 400 tubes at one time. Due to the quantities received and subsequent handling costs, disposal fees are \$0.25 per foot with a \$50.00 minimum charge.

## Can 1 or 2 bulbs be placed in the trash?

Please avoid placing in the trash. Residents are encouraged to properly dispose of each and every one of them. Because our trash stays in Richland, it is even more important that we take those steps to preserve our landfill, groundwater, and environment.

## Where Do I Get More Information?

Call the Benton County Moderate Risk Waste Facility at 942-7387.



**Thank you for keeping Richland clean & green.**



Public Information Office  
Environmental Education Program  
Richland, WA