

CFL's: A Bright Idea About Going Green

Perhaps you tried compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFL's) years ago when they first came out, but after a few days of being bathed in their harsh blue light that made your family resemble extras from Night of the Living Dead, you banished them to the attic or basement where they're probably still burning brightly today. CFLs have come a long way since those early days and are now available in a wide range of styles that are suitable for many different applications. Even better, their formerly ghoulish glow has been replaced by warmer shades that effectively mimic traditional incandescent bulbs.

CFL Facts to get you motivated:

- Use 1/4 the electricity of regular light bulbs to produce the same amount of light gives off 3/4 less heat than incandescent bulbs, which result in additional energy savings on air conditioning during the hot summer.
- Depending on the size of the bulb, it is estimated that each CFL will save from \$30 to over \$100 in energy costs over their lifespan. Using 3 CFL's will reduce global warming pollution by over a ton. That's the equivalent of the pollution from burning about 100 gallons of gas*
- Using 8 CFL's will eliminate the need to mine and burn over a ton of coal!*

**The actual cost savings and emissions reduction from the use of CFL's is dependent on many variables and may be higher or lower depending on the type of bulb, how it is used, the cost of electricity, the fuel mix used to generate electricity, and other factors. These estimates are based on supportable assumptions using a typical 60W equivalent CFL.*

What should you do with a CFL when it burns out?

Spent CFLs should never be disposed of in regular household trash because they contain mercury. As a matter of fact, it is against the law in New Hampshire to dispose of any mercury-containing products in landfills, incinerators, or transfer stations. Energy Star qualified CFLs have a warranty, so if the bulb fails within the warranty period, you may be able to return it to your retailer for replacement. Otherwise, the N.H. Department of Environmental Services (DES) recommends that burned out CFLs be recycled at local recycling facilities or retail stores if at all possible. If recycling is not an option, DES recommends that they be taken to a household hazardous waste collection site. These recommendations apply to recycling/disposal of all fluorescent bulbs, including fluorescent tube lamps and CFLs. To identify your current local recycling and/or household hazardous waste collection options, you should always contact your local municipality.

Today's Tip: There are new CFL's that can be used with a dimmer, it will be clearly marked on the package. You must always turn the light on at the HIGHEST setting, let the bulb come up to brightness before you dim the bulb. Otherwise, you can damage or even burn out the dimmer and the bulb will not last as long.

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