

Environmental Concerns

Mercury is a highly toxic metal that is polluting San Francisco Bay. Both the U.S. and California Environmental Protection Agencies have listed the Bay as polluted due to unsafe levels of mercury found in fish.

It's the Law to Recycle Fluorescent Lamps

Fluorescent lamps and high-intensity discharge (HID) lamps, including mercury vapor, high-pressure sodium, and metal halide lamps from businesses (and households) are banned from regular trash disposal in California because they contain mercury. Even low-level mercury lamps with green markings sold as "TCLP (Toxicity Characteristic Leaching Procedure)-compliant" are banned from disposal in regular trash.

Ballasts from fluorescent lamps are assumed to contain polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) unless they are marked or tested to show they do not contain PCBs. Ballasts that contain PCBs must be disposed of as a hazardous waste.

Energy Efficiency

Compared to incandescent lighting, fluorescent lighting uses less energy. Less energy use means lower lighting costs for your business, and also fewer air pollutants such as mercury, lead, nitrogen oxides and sulfur dioxide emitted by power plants. Even though fluorescent lamps contain mercury, when managed properly, they have less impact on our environment than conventional incandescents. Consider using fluorescent lamps whenever possible.

Businesses Must Recycle All Fluorescent and HID Lamps

You can help prevent releases of mercury to the Bay and ocean by recycling all fluorescent and HID lamps. Businesses may dispose of hazardous waste either through the San Mateo County **Very Small Quantity Generator Program (VSQG)** or through a licensed mercury recycler. A VSQG (as the law states) is any business that generates less than 100 kilograms (about 220 pounds or 27 gallons) of hazardous waste per calendar month. San Mateo County businesses that qualify as Very Small Quantity Generators may

participate in the collection events.
Recycling cost:

- Four-foot lamps: \$1.00
- Eight-foot lamps: \$2.00
- Other lamps: \$1.00

Businesses that generate more than 100 kilograms of hazardous waste per calendar month are large quantity generators and may contact their district inspector in the San Mateo County Environmental Health Department at (650) 363-4305 for additional information, or call a certified hauler to recycle their fluorescent lamps.

The San Mateo County VSQG Program and the San Mateo Countywide Stormwater Pollution Prevention Program encourage the recycling of all mercury-containing lamps.

Proper Lamp Handling

- ❑ Do not place used lamps in the trash.
- ❑ Fluorescent lamps are very delicate. Applying excess force to the lamp may cause the lamp to break. Broken lamps may release mercury posing health and environmental risks
- ❑ Lamps should be stored in appropriate containers to prevent breakage.
- ❑ Keep containers in a secure, dry area until you are ready to recycle them.
- ❑ Some mercury recyclers rent or provide cylindrical cardboard boxes for safe transportation of fluorescent lamps.
- ❑ Provide personnel training in the techniques and hazards of handling lamps.
- ❑ Maintain a contingency plan that describes the appropriate environmental and human health safeguards in place and the procedures and equipment that will be used in case of an emergency.
- ❑ Maintain records for three years documenting how many and from whom lamps are received and when and to where they are shipped for recycling.
- ❑ A 15-inch diameter drum for eight-foot lamps holds between 80-90 fluorescent lamps, while a 21-inch diameter drum for four-foot lamps holds between 160-170 lamps.

Very Small Quantity Generator Program

Drop off program for businesses in San Mateo County that generate small quantities of hazardous waste. For information contact the San Mateo County Health Services Agency's Household Hazardous Waste Hotline (650) 363-4718 and/or www.smhealth.org/hhw

Commercial Mercury Recycler Services

Fluorescent and other mercury-containing lamps and mercury-containing devices, such as thermometers, thermostats, switches, and relays. Company names are provided for information purposes, and they are not endorsed by STOPPP.

AERC Recycling Solutions
30677 Huntwood Ave, Hayward
(800) 628-3675; (510) 429-1129

Lighting Resources, Inc.
805 East Francis St.
Ontario, CA 91761
(888) 923-7252

Cleanup

If lamps are accidentally broken, store them in a non-metal closed container marked *Broken Fluorescent Lamps*. You may send broken lamps to a recycling facility or manage them according to hazardous waste rules.

When Possible, Buy Low Level Mercury Fluorescent Lamps

Major lighting manufacturers now produce fluorescent lamps with approximately 80% less mercury than the standard fluorescent lamp. Less mercury used in the production phase means less mercury in our water and environment. Low level mercury lamps can be found or ordered in most hardware and lighting stores.

Some examples of low level mercury containing fluorescent lamps are:

- ❑ GE "Ecolux"
- ❑ Philips "Alto"
- ❑ Sylvania "Ecologic"



San Mateo Countywide
Stormwater Pollution Prevention
Program (STOPPP)
555 County Center, Fifth Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063
(650) 363-4305
www.flowstobay.org

For more information-

Non-emergency calls:

1. San Mateo County Environmental Health Division's Household Hazardous Waste Hotline includes information for businesses who qualify under the Very Small Quantity Generator Program: (650) 363-4718
2. Local stormwater programs (see list below) can provide stormwater pollution prevention information and additional brochures:

Town of Atherton	(650) 752-0541
City of Belmont	(650) 595-7427
City of Brisbane	(415) 508-2130
City of Burlingame	(650) 558-7230
Town of Colma	(650) 757-8888
City of Daly City	(650) 991-8200
City of East Palo Alto	(650) 853-3189
City of Foster City	(650) 286-3270
City of Half Moon Bay	(650) 726-8260
Town of Hillsborough	(650) 375-7411
City of Menlo Park	(650) 330-6740
City of Millbrae	(650) 259-2339
City of Pacifica	(650) 738-3767
Town of Portola Valley	(650) 851-1700
City of Redwood City	(650) 780-7464
City of San Bruno	(650) 616-7160
City of San Carlos	(650) 802-4361
City of San Mateo	(650) 522-7340
City of South San Francisco	(650) 877-8634
Town of Woodside	(650) 851-6790
County of San Mateo	(650) 363-4708

Also contact www.flowstobay.org

3. **San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board:**
510) 622-2300

Emergency calls only:

1. Dial 911
2. Governor's Office of Emergency Services
Warning Center (24 hours): 1-800-852-7550

Recycle Mercury Containing Lamps - It's The Law!



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San Mateo Countywide Stormwater
Pollution Prevention Program
(STOPPP)
www.flowstobay.org