



WHAT IF IT BREAKS? How to handle a broken fluorescent light



Background

Fluorescent lights save electricity, so they are a good choice for energy conservation. However, they do contain a very small amount of mercury sealed within the glass tubing, which can not go into the trash.

Clean-up guidelines:

1. Open a window and leave the room for 15 minutes or more.
2. Carefully scoop up the fragments and powder with stiff paper or cardboard and place them in a sealed plastic bag.
 - Use disposable rubber gloves, if available (i.e., do not use bare hands).
 - Wipe the area clean with damp paper towels or disposable wet wipes and place them in the plastic bag.
 - Do not use a vacuum or broom to clean up the broken bulb on hard surfaces.
3. Place all cleanup materials in a second sealed plastic bag.
 - Place the first bag in a second sealed plastic bag and take it to the County HHW.
Wash your hands after handling the bags.
4. If a fluorescent bulb breaks on a rug or carpet:
 - First, remove all materials you can **without** using a vacuum cleaner, following the steps above. Sticky tape (such as duct tape) can be used to pick up small pieces and powder.
 - If vacuuming is needed after all visible materials are removed, vacuum the area where the bulb was broken, remove the vacuum bag (or empty and wipe the canister) and put the bag or vacuum debris in two sealed plastic bags. Contact the County HHW program for proper disposal.

