

The Alliance for a Clean and Healthy Vermont is a health-based coalition of citizens, children's advocates, health professionals, housing groups, environmentalists, and others committed to protecting human health from toxic chemical exposure.

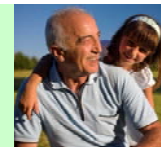
Our goal is to phase out the use of persistent toxic chemicals and to advance a precautionary approach towards the use and regulation of chemicals. We are working with business and government leaders to promote policies that protect public health and support the safest alternatives.

Founding Organizations

- Informed Green Solutions
- River Network
- Toxics Action Center
- Vermont Public Interest Research Group
- Voices For Vermont's Children

The Alliance for a Clean and Healthy Vermont includes more than a dozen organizations.

Green Lighting



Not All Lamps are Created Equal

The need for energy-efficient lighting has increased the popularity of fluorescent and high intensity discharge lamps. Both types of lighting contain mercury, a known neurotoxin that can build up in our bodies and the environment.

Mercury used in lamps accounts for roughly 5% of worldwide mercury use and is expected to dramatically increase as inefficient incandescent bulbs are phased out. The amount of mercury contained in a lamp can range anywhere from 2 to 100 milligrams depending on the manufacturer, make, and model.

This wide range of mercury content can be explained by examining methods used to inject mercury into the lamps. New methods are more efficient and better controlled than older techniques which tend to lose more mercury in the production process. These outdated techniques can lose up to one half of the mercury in the process.

Current Collection & Recycling Programs

VT DEC Program

The demand for energy efficient lighting makes the need for an effective recycling infrastructure apparent. Currently, Vermonters can drop off spent fluorescent bulbs at 71 participating local hardware stores including ACE, True Value, and Do It Best. To date, the program has collected 22,796 CFLs, U-Tube and circle line bulbs, and 351,111 lineal feet for tubes. Unfortunately, the funding for this Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation program is not sustainable and is nearly exhausted.

Efficiency VT

Efficiency Vermont offers free recycling for Vermont residents at select locations throughout the state. However, this program only accepts compact fluorescent bulbs.

Solid Waste Districts

Finally, Vermonters can dispose of mercury-containing lamps at their local solid waste district's hazardous household waste (HHW) collection sites. However, many HHW facilities are not open year round.

Benefits of CFLs

Although compact fluorescent bulbs (CFLs) do contain small amounts of mercury, their significant benefits merit their continued use.

According to Efficiency Vermont, ENERGY STAR CFLs use 66-75% less energy than incandescent bulbs and can last 6 to 10 times longer.

“If everyone in the country replaced just one light bulb with an ENERGY STAR qualified bulb, we would conserve enough energy to light more than three million homes for a year, save more than \$600 million in annual energy costs, and prevent greenhouse gases equivalent to the emissions of more than 800,000 cars.”

Source: Efficiency Vermont
<http://www.newbulbintown.com/about/>

OPPORTUNITIES FOR VERMONT

VT DEC Collection Program

- Program began in 2005
- Total cost of the program is \$45,000 to date.
- 71 participating hardware stores
- To date, the program has collected 22,796 CFLs, U-Tube and circle line bulbs, and 351,111 lineal feet for tubes
- Costs for recycling lamps are \$.35 per CFL and \$.5 per lineal foot

Source: VT DEC

Setting Mercury Content Standards

Efforts have been made to limit the amount of mercury used in lamps. The European Union (EU) has set a 5 milligram limit for compact fluorescent bulbs and a 5 to 10 milligram limit for linear fluorescent lamps. In addition, the EU has begun a process for revising and lowering these limits that should be completed this year.

In the United States, California has broken ground by passing legislation modeled after the EU standard. By January 2010, any lamp manufactured or sold into California must comply with the EU directive. **Vermont should follow California's example and set mercury content standards for lamps.**

Establishing a Fair and Convenient Collection Program

Vermont's current collection programs place the financial burdens squarely on the shoulders of the VT DEC, Efficiency VT, solid waste districts, and ultimately the tax payers. **Instead, Vermont should require manufacturers to also share in the responsibility of properly disposing of mercury-containing lamps.**

Quick Facts

- Mercury used in lamps accounts for roughly 5% of worldwide mercury
- The amount of mercury contained in a lamp can range anywhere from 2 to 100 milligrams
- Older methods for injecting mercury into lamps can lose up to one half of the mercury in the process
- The European Union and California have passed laws limiting the amount of mercury contained in lamps
- Current collection programs do not require manufacturers to share in the costs of collecting and recycling spent lamps