



Fluorescent Bulbs and Lamps Special Waste Management Plan Metro Transfer Station Operations

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PURPOSE

This document is a standard operating procedure for the acceptance, handling, packaging, storage, and disposal related to acceptance of fluorescent bulbs and lamps at the Metro South or Central Transfer Station.

BACKGROUND

All fluorescent bulbs and lamps contain a small amount of mercury. Many varieties contain enough mercury to qualify as hazardous waste under Oregon regulations. Metro’s practice is to accept bulbs and lamps in the household hazardous waste facility from households or conditionally exempt generators. However, on occasion small amounts (up to 5) of bulbs are accepted and segregated on the transfer station floor, boxed and held until the hazardous waste facility staff can remove them for proper disposal. This helps to reduce the amount of bulbs that are “hidden” or broken by the general public as they unload their waste.

POTENTIAL HAZARDS OF FLUORESCENT BULBS AND LAMPS

All fluorescent lamps contain a small amount of mercury, ranging from a few milligrams in compact fluorescent bulbs (CFLs), to as much as 50 milligrams in older large fluorescent tubes. While the amount contained in each individual lamp is small, the potential cumulative amount when many bulbs are broken can be significant.

Mercury is a neurotoxin and environmental contaminant. Mercury vapor released to the atmosphere can eventually end up in surface waters, where it can accumulate in fish,
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which can be hazardous when consumed, especially to pregnant women and young children.

Broken tubes also have sharp edges, which can pose a cut hazard.

ACCEPTANCE OF FLUORESCENT BULBS AND LAMPS

Fluorescent bulbs and lamps are accepted in the household hazardous waste facilities at Metro's transfer stations, provided they are of the non-hazardous variety, or are generated by households or conditionally exempt generators (CEGs). The non-hazardous variety can be identified by their green-colored end caps.

Note that Metro does encourage generators of fluorescent bulbs and lamps to recycle them at any of the various commercial recyclers in the area. However many generators are unwilling to pay the cost, or in some cases are unaware of recycling opportunities.

Any non-household waste generator disposing of fluorescent bulbs and lamps must conduct a hazardous waste determination, as detailed in Oregon regulations. The total weight of hazardous waste generated, including both lamps and any other hazardous waste generated, must be below the quantity thresholds specified in the regulations.

Any obvious large accumulations of fluorescent bulbs and lamps spotted by transfer station staff in incoming loads will not be accepted and an unacceptable waste incident from will be completed for follow up with the customer.

Any intact bulbs found by transfer station staff are temporarily stored in boxes in a holding area, then later brought to the hazardous waste facility at the site for recycling.

Intact fluorescent bulbs and lamps are accepted for recycling at the hazardous waste facility at each transfer station site. Procedures for acceptance, handling, storage and disposal of fluorescent bulbs and lamps at the hazardous waste facility are covered in the current Operations Manual for each hazardous waste facility.

SAFE HANDLING PROCEDURES

Transfer station staff are trained about the hazards of mercury vapor, and are instructed to avoid lingering close to any accumulation of broken fluorescent bulbs and lamps.

Standard issue PPE will be worn when handling mixed solid waste, which may contain fluorescent bulbs and lamps.

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DISPOSAL

Fluorescent bulbs and lamps that have been accepted according to the policy above will not be commingled with solid waste, but will be transferred to the household hazardous waste facility for proper disposal.