

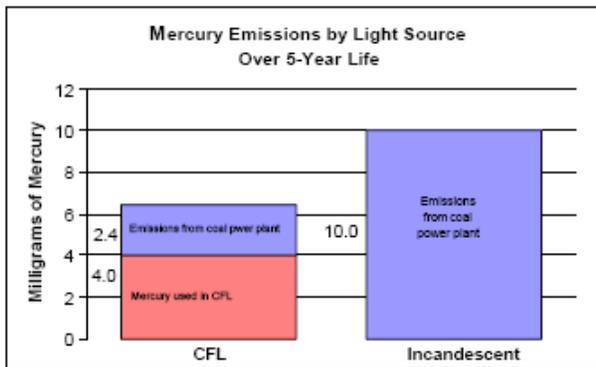
## Mercury and Fluorescent Lamps

Mercury is an essential component of fluorescent lamps. Compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs) contain a very small amount of mercury. On average, CFLs contain 5 milligrams of mercury, about the amount that would cover the tip of a ball point pen, as compared to 500 milligrams in a mercury thermometer.<sup>1</sup> The type of mercury in fluorescent lamps, elemental mercury, is less toxic than the methylmercury released through the burning of coal for electricity. CFLs require less energy to produce light than traditional light bulbs, therefore causing less mercury to be released into the atmosphere by power plants. Over the same time period, a CFL will produce about 75% less mercury emissions than a regular incandescent light bulb.

Fluorescent lamps are safe to use and do not release mercury except when broken. Therefore, all fluorescent lamps should be handled with care. Light bulbs are made of glass and can break if dropped or handled roughly. If broken, extra caution should be taken to carefully wipe up the pieces without touching them. Inhalation of mercury vapor can pose health risks.<sup>2</sup> Using a vacuum cleaner should be avoided because this can disperse the mercury vapors.<sup>3</sup>

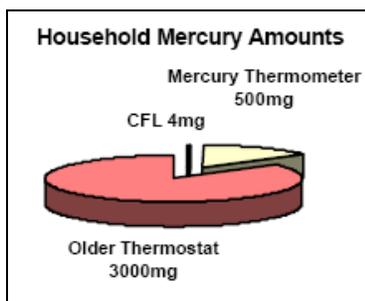
For more information on the benefits and environmental impacts of fluorescent lamps or on how to clean up broken lamps go to

<http://www.pca.state.mn.us/publications/w-hhw4-30.pdf>



Source: US EPA, June 2002

By disposing of fluorescent bulbs properly, mercury contained in CFL bulbs is recycled. For CFL disposal options, visit [www.greenguardian.com](http://www.greenguardian.com) or call (toll free) 1-877-630-0668.



It will take over a hundred compact fluorescent lamps to equal the amount of mercury in one mercury thermometer and over 700 lamps to equal the mercury in an older thermostat.

Source: US EPA

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.energystar.gov/ia/partners/promotions/change\\_light/downloads/Fact\\_Sheet\\_Mercury.pdf](http://www.energystar.gov/ia/partners/promotions/change_light/downloads/Fact_Sheet_Mercury.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.epa.gov/mercury/effects.htm>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.epa.gov/ttn/oarpg/t3/reports/volume5.pdf>