

Universal Waste Procedure Mercury Containing Light Tubes

I. Purpose:

To manage control, recycle, and document the disposal of mercury containing lighting tubes, in accordance with state and federal regulations.

- Procedure for management of waste lamps, light bulbs and ballast.

II. Instruction:

- A. Carefully package waste lamps and bulb to prevent breakage.
- B. Store waste lamps and bulbs in secure area.
- C. The proper container (cardboard container with proper top).
- D. Label container as “Universal Waste—Lamps” and annotate start date when first bulb is contained.
- E. Store tube in covered container; this helps to prevent breakage and is mandated by law.
- F. Do not break or reduce the size of the tube container (cardboard). Do not use metal container, since metal may absorb mercury.
- G. Maintain a running total of the number of collection sites for recycling information.

III. Lamps and bulbs that are regulated consist of:

- Fluorescent lamps
- Sodium vapor lamps
- High and low pressure mercury vapor lamps
- High intensity discharge (HD lamps)
- Incandescent light bulbs

CURRENT EXCEPTION—Alto Fluorescent bulbs (identified by green metal ends) contain little or no mercury and are not subject to these requirements now. However, for safety reasons, alto lamps should be placed in a box or heavy plastic bag before disposal into a regular trash bin. In candescent light bulbs (regular household bulbs) may be placed in the trash.

IV. Lamp/ballast replacement:

- A. Lamps are to be changed out by facilities management personnel who have been trained in proper handling and management procedure by supervisory personnel.
- B. Lamps and ballasts are frequently replaced. Ballasts and heavy metal boxes are associated with florescent fixtures that regulate the flow of electricity. Ballast manufactured before 1979 may contain polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs); these are toxic and pose a health risk to humans and wildlife.
NOTE—if ballast is marked “no PCB” assume it doesn’t contain PCB. If the ballast isn’t marked, assume it does.

Notify Michael Robinson at the office of Universal Waste regarding questions related to bulbs, ballast, and any materials that may be considered “Universal Waste.”

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