

Recycling Fluorescent Lamps

Recycling...

- Reduces waste sent to landfill sites.
- Reduces potential contamination of land and water.
- Improves health and safety.
- Delivers "Duty of Care" to the user.

Why is it important to recycle fluorescent lamps?

The mercury from one fluorescent light bulb can pollute 30,000 litres of water beyond the safe level of drinking.

If somebody has had contact by mercury the common symptoms can be loss of feeling to the limbs, tunnel vision and even coma when the person has had a large amount of contact.

Hat makers often used to suffer from these symptoms as they used mercuric nitrate to soften felt; this gave rise to the expression "mad as a hatter".

Mercury can easily contaminate large areas of water supplies and poison fish which is a health hazard if they are then consumed.



Above: a fluorescent lamp storage box.

How to recycle fluorescent lamps.

When a fluorescent lamp has come to the end of its life cycle it must be recycled correctly. Any fluorescent lamps should not be sent to a landfill as the mercury is a potential health hazard to people that work there and can easily contaminate local water supplies.

Fluorescent lamps should be stored correctly before being sent to a recycling centre. There is a wide selection of storage solutions on the market; the storage box above is a common box where the lamps are laid horizontally.

Fluorescent lamps can be recycled by two different techniques. The first is to cut off both ends of the lamp and then remove the contents; the contents and other components are separated and processed to a high purity product. The second method is to send the lamps through a shredder, this crushes the complete product. After the lamp has been crushed the ingredients are separated and processed.

Links:

www.mercuryrecycling.co.uk

www.envirogreen.co.uk

www.karraway.co.uk