



# Compact Fluorescent Lights

Switching to compact fluorescent lights (CFLs) is a great way to use energy wisely and help the environment. Because these bulbs use 75% less energy and last up to 10 times longer than comparable incandescent bulbs, they can help reduce your energy bills – and the less energy we use, the less power needs to be generated, a plus for the environment.

To put the potential savings into perspective, if every American home replaced just one incandescent bulb with a CFL, it would save enough energy to light 3 million homes a year, and prevent greenhouse gases equivalent to the emissions of 800,000 vehicles.

CFLs have improved greatly from the early models. They start instantly, without flickering, and provide warm, high quality light.



## When using CFLs keep in mind these tips:

- When purchasing a CFL, look for the ENERGY STAR symbol because ENERGY STAR qualified CFLs have a warranty.
- When installing a CFL, hold it by its plastic base rather than the glass tubes.
- CFLs are sometimes larger than the incandescent bulbs they replace, so make sure the new bulb fits easily. Do not allow the diffuser, shade, or lamp harp to press against the glass tubes.
- While most CFLs may be used either indoors or out, if installed outdoors, CFLs should be protected from moisture. In extreme cold – below 0°F – it may take more time for bulbs to start and reach full brightness.
- Installing CFLs in poorly ventilated fixtures may significantly shorten their lifetime.
- Using CFLs in sockets that have been damaged or contain loose material can pose a hazard.
- While some CFLs can be used on dimming circuits, the bulbs you are receiving should only be used with basic on/off switches. Using regular CFLs on dimmers will cause premature product failure and may create a fire hazard. (**Note:** You may use your new CFLs in fixtures with three-way switches, but the bulb will only provide one level of brightness when the switch is in the second or third position.)

## CFLs contain a small amount of mercury. So, if one breaks, follow these steps:

- Open a window and leave the room for 15 minutes or more.
- Using disposable rubber gloves and stiff paper, pick up the broken pieces and wipe the area clean with a damp disposable wipe.
- Avoid vacuuming the area – try using tape to pick up pieces from carpeting if necessary.
- Place all pieces in a sealed plastic bag and then place the bag into a second plastic bag. If you vacuumed the area, remove the vacuum bag and place it in a second sealable bag.
- Call your refuse company for disposal procedures or contact your county's recycling center. For details, visit [epa.gov/mercury](http://epa.gov/mercury).
- When CFLs do burn out, dispose of them safely. Contact your refuse company or visit [energystar.gov](http://energystar.gov) to learn more.



For more lighting tips and to learn more about energy efficiency rebates and incentives, visit [nyseg.com](http://nyseg.com) or [rge.com](http://rge.com).