

The Greener Davis Digest

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What should be done with CFLs when they burn out?

Compact fluorescent bulbs (CFLs) have been heralded as the environmentally responsible replacement for the incandescent light bulb. Unfortunately, CFLs and their big brothers, fluorescent tubes, both contain mercury, making them hazardous to the environment. California State law has made it illegal to throw them away in the trash. So what do we do with them?

Businesses in Yolo County have three main options to dispose of their fluorescents:

1) Mail-back programs: Many recycling companies sell mail-back boxes to collect CFLs or fluorescent tubes. The recycler sells the boxes at a fixed price, which includes shipping and disposal costs. When you receive your box, you can fill it with your burned out CFLs and ship it back to the recycler.

To find a lamp recycling company, type in "recycle fluorescent lamps" in your internet search bar.

2) Lighting contractors: A business can pay for a lighting contractor to replace their burned-out light bulbs. The lighting contractor can then send the CFLs and fluorescent tubes to a recycling facility.

3) Conditionally Exempt Small Quantity Generator Program (CESQG). The Yolo



Compact fluorescent bulbs contain mercury and are illegal to dispose of in the trash.

County Central Landfill offers the CESQG program so that local businesses can dispose of their hazardous waste (including CFLs and fluorescent tubes) easily. A fee will apply, depending on the type and quantity of the hazardous material brought in.

Appointments are required for the CESQG Program and can be made by following these steps:

STEP 1: Call 1-800-61-TOXIC (1-800-618-6942) to obtain an EPA ID # if your business does not already have one.

STEP 2: Call 1-(866) 714-8470 to schedule an appointment to drop off your hazardous waste at the Yolo County Central Landfill.

Want to Green your business? Start a Green Team!

While most business owners now recognize the savings and marketing potential in an eco-friendly business, it may seem like a daunting task to replace all existing electronics and appliances with energy efficient ones. However, you don't need to overhaul your whole business in order to help slow climate change.

Starting a Green Team is a great way to involve employees and create a sense of common purpose in the workplace.

A green team consists of a group of employees that work to promote environmentally responsible practices in the workplace. Green teams can work with management to improve operations, develop formalized programs, policies and environmental management systems that measure progress, assess impacts, and continually improve results.

Green teams can focus on one issue or many: recycling, waste reduction, "buy recycled" policies, energy conservation, etc. Often green teams focus on steps individual employees can take in the course of an average day.

Here are some steps to starting a Green Team:

- Schedule a kick-off meeting. Invite attendees by email, at staff meetings, or by posting notices. You could also ask each department to nominate a representative—the best teams are made up of diverse members who are from different departments and work at different levels in the company.
- Establish goals and objectives. Brainstorm with the team. Start with something easy to build momentum, like a "Think Before



You Print" campaign.

- Launch your project. Make sure each department has a coordinator to help explain goals or new procedures, send them out by email, and post notices—make them colorful and fun!
- Keep it going. Publish updates, offer incentives and prizes to groups who have contributed most to reaching the goal. Have a new project ready when the first goal is met.

Visit www.earthshare.org/greening-business.html for more information about starting a green team at your business.

