

Everyday Environmental Stewardship

CFL Recycling

Andrews Siliski and Tom Nutt-Powell **Key Issue:** Mercury in CFLs

Stewardship Opportunities: Recycle CFLs

Buying and installing compact fluorescent light (“CFL”) bulbs is an extremely easy way to conserve electricity and cut down on electrical bills and reduce one’s carbon footprint! Lighting is used every day in buildings; it constitutes 25% of electricity consumed in the average home. CFLs use about 75% less electricity (watts) as an incandescent bulb and at the same time produce the same amount of light (lumens). The lifespan of a standard CFL — 10,000 hours — is 10 times the lifespan of a standard incandescent light bulb. CFLs can be used in all buildings for all purposes. There is a CFL for every need (e.g. homes, offices, places of worship, schools) and fixture (e.g. standard and candelabra base). CFLs also work in dimmable fixtures.

Stewardship Opportunity - Recycling CFLs

CFLs cannot be thrown away or recycled like incandescent or halogen light bulbs. CFLs need to be handled with care. If one implodes, it releases the mercury gas into the air potentially harming people nearby. CFLs on average contain 4mg of mercury so they need to be recycled at the local hazardous waste facility in accordance with local laws and regulations.

This is very easy. The only required action is taking the CFLs to the local recycling depot. They do the rest of the work. A good website for finding the nearest recycling center is

<http://earth911.org/>

Entering a zip code will give the closest recycling center, website, address, phone number, and hours open. This site also provides information on all sorts of recycling.

A particularly good solution is to get and use recycling boxes or pails, such as that pictured above. The boxes/pails can be kept at typical assembly places – houses-of-worship, schools, businesses.