Mercury Contamination.

Did you know?

- Fluorescent bulbs are 75% more efficient than incandescent bulbs and last 5-10 times longer.
- All mercury-containing lamps, including "green" bulbs, must be properly disposed at your local Household Hazardous Waste Facility.
- Just tiny drops from a mercury thermometer can pollute an entire room.
- Azogue, used in amulets for spiritual healing, is elemental mercury and carries the same health problems and water pollution risks if not disposed of properly.
- SF Bay has high mercury concentrations in fish (1.2 ppm).
- Adults should not consume more than two 8 ounce meals per month of SF Bay sport fish including sturgeon and striped bass caught in the delta and no striped bass over 35 inches long.
- Pregnant women, nursing mothers and children under 6 shouldn't eat more than one meal of fish per month.

Contra Costa Clean Water Program

Water is Life. Rescue It.

1-800-NO-DUMPING
(1-800-663-8674)
www.cccleanwater.org

*(Click on **Residents** then **FAQ's** to find the household hazardous waste collection facility near you).*

Delta Household Hazardous Waste

925-756-1990
www.ddsd.org

Protect Your Family From Mercury Contamination.

Don't Trash Fluorescent Bulbs!

Fluorescents Bulbs, Mercury and the Environment

OSH Complete Home & Garden

Delta Household Hazardous Waste Collection Facility

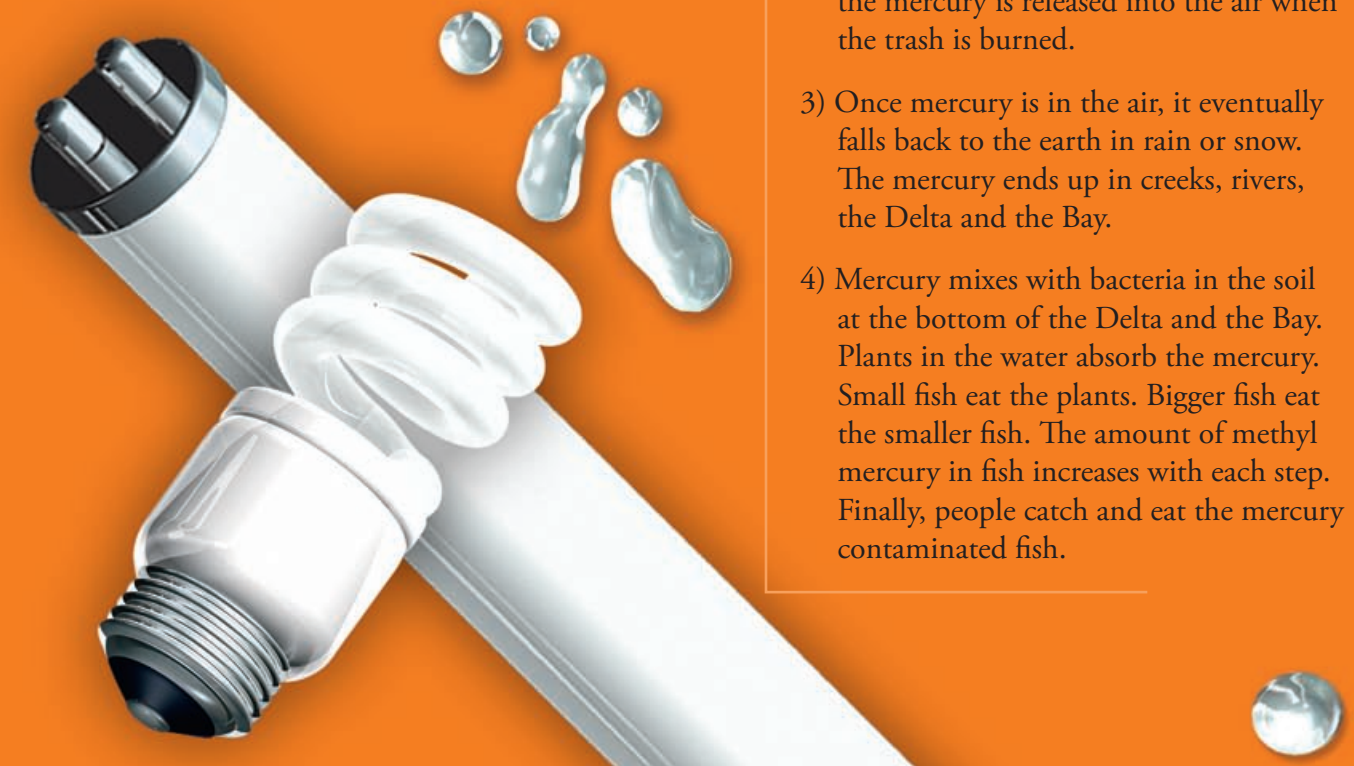
Contra Costa Clean Water Program

Protect Your Family From Mercury Contamination. Don't Trash Fluorescent Bulbs!

What is Mercury

Mercury is a highly toxic metal that is harmful to both humans and wildlife. Exposure to even small amounts of mercury, over a long period of time, may cause negative health effects including damage to the brain, kidneys and lungs.

Mercury can be liquid or gaseous. If heated, it's an odorless and colorless gas. Mercury is the only metal that is liquid at room temperature (i.e. mercury thermometer). In both forms, it's just as dangerous.



Mercury & Our Fish

Mercury gets into our water and fish in a few different ways.

1) People often throw things that contain mercury in to the trash. Some thermometers, thermostats, batteries and medical supplies and all fluorescent bulbs contain mercury. These products must go to your local Household Hazardous Waste drop-off site.

2) If the contaminated trash goes to a landfill, the mercury may leak into groundwater or run off to the Delta or Bay. If the trash goes to an incinerator, the mercury is released into the air when the trash is burned.

3) Once mercury is in the air, it eventually falls back to the earth in rain or snow. The mercury ends up in creeks, rivers, the Delta and the Bay.

4) Mercury mixes with bacteria in the soil at the bottom of the Delta and the Bay. Plants in the water absorb the mercury. Small fish eat the plants. Bigger fish eat the smaller fish. The amount of methyl mercury in fish increases with each step. Finally, people catch and eat the mercury contaminated fish.

How to Safely Handle & Store Bulbs

Fluorescent bulbs are a great way of conserving energy but they contain the gaseous form of Mercury. Mercury is highly toxic metal and can be harmful to humans and wildlife if exposed. If the bulb breaks, you will be exposed to more mercury than what is considered safe...you will experience more exposure in seconds than what is safe for an entire year.

When properly disposing fluorescent bulbs, it is important to follow the storage and disposal information below.

> Cushion the bulbs by wrapping them in newspaper then rubber-banding multiple bulbs together to help prevent breakage.

> Store bulbs in a safe place to avoid breakage and mark the storage area appropriately.

> Place waste bulbs in a box to carefully transport to drop-off site.

> When transporting bulbs to a drop-off site, adults are advised to not have children in the car in case of the bulbs breaking accidentally.

> Separate any accidentally broken bulbs into a leak-proof container that will prevent leakage and releases of mercury and other hazardous constituents.