

Selling fluorescent & mercury lamps

Mercury is a toxic element that is an essential component of all fluorescent and most legacy high-intensity discharge (HID) lamps. Fluorescent lamps with two bases are considered linear fluorescent lamps. Fluorescent lamps with one base, commonly called an end cap, are considered compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs), and may be of any shape, such as coils, circles, or folded.

Fluorescent and HID lamps may have screw-type bases similar to traditional household incandescent lamps, pin-type bases with one or more pins projecting lengthwise either exposed or recessed in a protective cup, or bases with one or more studs on the side of the base, called bayonet-type bases. One type of mercury-containing HID lamp, which produces a greenish or bluish-white light, commonly used historically for street and outdoor building security lighting, is called a mercury vapor lamp.

All fluorescent lamps, including CFLs and linear fluorescent lamps with green bases, commonly called green tips, contain mercury. All fluorescent and mercury-containing HID lamps must be recycled after use in Minnesota, and may not be placed into the normal trash or crushed or broken.

Any person in Minnesota offering a fluorescent or mercury-containing HID lamp for sale or donation is subject to the sales ban and seller requirements explained in this fact sheet, whether a private citizen, non-profit organization, or business. Offers and sales through any method are regulated, whether in a store or shop, booth, or through an online sales venue. If the lamp is located in Minnesota, it is regulated, regardless of where a potential purchaser may be located. Sellers outside Minnesota offering or selling lamps to buyers in the state may also be subject to these bans and requirements, depending on their status under Minnesota law.

Fluorescent & mercury lamp sales bans

Screw-type base CFLs Bayonet-type base CFLs Mercury vapor lamps Mercury vapor lamp ballasts	All offer and sales of new lamps prohibited, starting January 1, 2025 .
Pin-type base CFLs Linear fluorescent lamps	All offer and sales of new lamps prohibited, starting January 1, 2026 .

These bans apply whether the lamps are offered for sale separately, in a kit, or already installed in a fixture. The bans also apply regardless of when the lamps were manufactured, including to lamps offered as New In Box (NIB) or New Old Stock (NOS).

Notes: These bans do not apply to specialty lamps used only for image capture or projection, disinfection, ozone generation, tanning, quality inspection, industrial processing, or scientific applications.

These bans also apply only to the offer and sale of lamps; lamps already purchased may be used until they fail or are replaced in the normal course of operations. The MPCA always encourages users to consider and install the most efficient effective lighting for any use.

Until sale of a particular fluorescent or mercury-containing lamp is banned, sellers must comply with the [Seller requirements](#) on page 2.

Seller requirements

All sellers of fluorescent lamps and mercury-containing HID lamps that are not subject to the [sales bans](#) on page 1, such as sodium vapor lamps and metal halide lamps, and fluorescent lamps before the start dates, must ensure that each lamp offered for sale is labeled to indicate that the lamp contains mercury, that the lamp may not be placed into the garbage, and that the lamp must be recycled. Labels may be text or reasonably understood graphics.

In addition, sellers of fluorescent lamps must post a notice in at least 36-point type at any physical sale location and in any online sales venue listing for the lamps that states:

“Fluorescent bulbs save energy and reduce environmental pollution. Note: Fluorescent bulbs contain a small amount of mercury and must be recycled at the end of their use. Contact your county or utility for recycling options.”

Sellers are not required to accept used fluorescent lamps or mercury-containing HID lamps back from customers or the public for recycling, however if you do, manage them as universal waste. See MPCA fact sheet #w-hw4-62, Universal wastes, at <https://www.pca.state.mn.us/sites/default/files/w-hw4-62.pdf>.

Commercial sales

Sales of fluorescent lamps and mercury-containing HID lamps to industrial, commercial, or multiunit residential building buyers must include a statement on the invoice or in a separate document that the lamps contain mercury, a hazardous substance regulated by state law, and may not be placed into solid waste.

Contractor requirements

Contractors working on fluorescent lamps or mercury-containing HID lamps on industrial, commercial, or multiunit residential buildings or in outdoor lighting must provide a statement to the person for whom the work is being done that the lamps contain mercury and that describes the recycling arrangements for the lamps.

Both the contractor and the building or lighting owner are jointly responsible for the proper handling and recycling of the lamps. See MPCA fact sheet #w-hw4-62, Universal wastes, linked above, for handling requirements.

More information

Items containing liquid mercury, such as thermometers, thermostats, switches, sphygmomanometers (blood pressure gauges), fishing lures, and plumb bobs, are regulated for sale separately in Minnesota. See MPCA fact sheet #w-hw4-26, Selling mercury items, at <https://www.pca.state.mn.us/sites/default/files/w-hw4-26.pdf>.

Cosmetics, disinfectants, and pharmaceuticals that contain mercury as an ingredient are regulated for sale in Minnesota under another set of requirements. See MPCA fact sheet #w-hw4-22, Selling mercury cosmetics and pharmaceuticals, at <https://www.pca.state.mn.us/sites/default/files/w-hw4-22.pdf>.

Guidance and requirements in this fact sheet were compiled from Minn. Stat. 115A.932; Minn. Stat. 116.92; Minn. Stat. 325E.127; and Minn. R. 7045.1400. For Minnesota Statutes and Rules, visit the Office of the Revisor of Statutes at <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/pubs>.

Minnesota Pollution Control Agency

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