

Selling fluorescent & mercury lamps (bulbs)

Mercury is a toxic element that is an essential component of all *fluorescent lamps* and most legacy *high-intensity discharge (HID) lamps*, all also commonly referred to as *bulbs*. Fluorescent lamps and some mercury-containing HID lamps are being phased out of use. The offer, sale, distribution, and mandatory recycling of fluorescent and mercury-containing HID lamps is regulated in Minnesota by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA).

Note: Some fluorescent lamps contain smaller amounts of mercury and may have green end caps, often referred to as *green tips*. Though exempt from some federal regulations, such lamps remain subject to the Minnesota [sales bans](#) and [recycling requirement](#) summarized in this fact sheet.

How can I tell if a lamp or bulb contains mercury?

Most mercury-containing lamps are labeled either on the glass body of the lamp or on the base with the words “Contains mercury” or with the letters “Hg” in a circle. All fluorescent lamps contain mercury whether or not labeled.



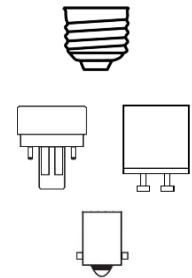
Which fluorescent lamps are banned or will be banned from sale?

Fluorescent lamps are categorized by their shape. Fluorescent lamps with two end caps, or bases, are called *linear fluorescent lamps*, and may be straight or folded, often called a *U-Bend*. Fluorescent lamps with one base are called *compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs)*, and may be of any shape, including spiral, coils, circles, or folded. CFLs are further categorized by their type of base:

Many CFLs have a *screw* type base similar to traditional household incandescent lamps, also called an *Edison base*. Screw type bases may be of any size.

Another common CFL base type has two or more *pins* that project lengthwise along the axis of the lamp. Pin type bases may have exposed or recessed pins of different lengths.

The rarer *bayonet* CFL base type has one or more studs on the side of the base.



Fluorescent & mercury lamp sales bans

Screw base CFLs Bayonet base CFLs Mercury vapor lamps Mercury vapor lamp ballasts	All offers and sales of new* lamps are prohibited.
Pin base CFLs Linear fluorescent lamps	All offers and sales of new* lamps will be prohibited, starting January 1, 2026 . Until this ban is effective, sellers must comply with the seller requirements on page 2.

*New lamps includes all unused lamps, such as those that would be New In Box (NIB) and New Old Stock (NOS). The bans apply whether the new lamps are offered for sale separately, in a kit, or already installed in a fixture.

Any person in Minnesota offering these mercury-containing lamps for sale is subject to these requirements, whether a private citizen, collector, 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 selling lamps to buyers in the state may also be subject to these bans.

Note: The sales bans do not apply to mercury-containing sodium vapor or metal halide lamps, nor to specialty fluorescent or mercury vapor lamps designed only for image capture or projection, disinfection, ozone generation, tanning, quality inspection, industrial processing, or scientific applications. However, all of these lamps remain subject to the [mercury-containing lamp recycling requirement](#) below.

The sales bans also only restrict the offer for sale and sale of certain mercury-containing lamps. There is no restriction on the continued use of mercury-containing lamps already purchased.

Mercury-containing lamp seller requirements

All sellers of fluorescent lamps and mercury-containing HID lamps that are not [banned from sale](#) must ensure that each lamp offered for sale is labeled with text or graphics to indicate that the lamp contains mercury, that the lamp may not be placed into the garbage, and that the lamp must be recycled.

Sellers are not required to accept used lamps for recycling, however if you do, you must manage them properly. See the [mercury-containing lamp recycling requirement](#) below.

Commercial sales

Sales of fluorescent lamps and mercury-containing HID lamps that are not [banned from sale](#) 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 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 the [mercury-containing lamp recycling requirement](#) below.

Mercury-containing lamp recycling requirement

All mercury-containing lamps in Minnesota, including green tip fluorescent lamps, must be recycled when discarded. They may not be crushed or disposed into the solid waste. Manage mercury-containing lamps for recycling as universal waste, as discussed in MPCA fact sheet #w-hw4-62, Universal waste, at <https://www.pca.state.mn.us/sites/default/files/w-hw4-62.pdf>.

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/>.

Minnesota Pollution Control Agency

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