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Letter: [Why use compact fluorescents?](#)

Thursday, May 18, 2006

Sustainable Belmont applauds the town of Belmont for its launch of a residential and business recycling program for used compact fluorescent light (CFL) bulbs and tubes. Because CFLs contain a very small amount of mercury, they need to be treated as hazardous waste and should not be included in regular trash. It's important to note that CFLs do not pose a risk in your home unless they are broken, and the environmental benefits of using CFLs far outweigh the small amount of mercury they contain.

More than half our nation's electricity comes from coal-burning power plants - the greatest source of U.S. mercury emissions. Because CFLs use much less electricity to operate than regular incandescent light bulbs, and last up to 10 times longer, they actually release less mercury into the environment overall. And while CFLs cost a little more up front, with the energy you save you can lower your annual electric bill by up to \$20 for each incandescent bulb you replace.

The bottom line? Please use CFLs - look for ones with the EnergyStar logo, which produce an even light with no flicker - but dispose of them properly.

Jan Kruse and Heather Tuttle
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Sustainable Belmont