1.0 Summary & Purpose:
Compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs) contain a very small amount of mercury sealed within the glass tubing – an average of 5 milligrams – about the amount that would cover the tip of a ball point pen. In accordance with Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, the Institution recycles CFLs through an approved vendor to recover the mercury.

This guideline describes the waste management procedures for spent, damaged, and broken CFLs. Unbroken CFLs that are spent, damaged, or otherwise unusable should be disposed as per the universal waste procedure below. Broken CFLs must be collected as hazardous waste using the spill clean-up procedure that is listed below. This procedure should also be used for full-length, fluorescent lamps that are broken.


2.0 Unbroken CFL Universal Waste Procedure:
- Unbroken CFLs should be placed in designated containers that are located at the Institution’s universal waste collection locations. The collection locations are listed at this website: [http://ehs.whoi.edu/ehs/DesktopDefault.aspx?tabindex=3&tabid=7&itemID=294](http://ehs.whoi.edu/ehs/DesktopDefault.aspx?tabindex=3&tabid=7&itemID=294).
- These universal waste collection areas are only for waste items that are generated from Institution activities, i.e., not for waste items from home.

3.0 Broken CFL Spill Clean Up Procedure:
- Isolate the area with the broken CFL. If possible, open a window or door and leave the area/room for at least 15 minutes to allow the small amount of mercury vapor to dissipate.
- Wearing safety glasses and protective gloves carefully scoop or pickup glass fragments and place in a plastic container or bag that is closable/sealable. Use duct tape or other tape to pickup any remaining small glass fragments and powder. Place in the container and seal/close tightly.
- The spill cleanup and broken CFL debris must be managed as hazardous waste. Complete a red hazardous waste tag and label the tag ‘broken bulbs containing mercury’. Submit a waste pick up request: [http://ehs.whoi.edu/ehs/DesktopDefault.aspx?tabindex=4&tabid=7&itemID=92](http://ehs.whoi.edu/ehs/DesktopDefault.aspx?tabindex=4&tabid=7&itemID=92)

Contact the EH&S Office for assistance, x3347.