

Disposing of Energy Waste

2008-06-09

Pineapple partners with AirCycle to provide a comprehensive and simple recycling solution for energy-saving compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs), and other electronic waste.

Compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs) have been getting some bad press lately. While everyone agrees that the funny-shaped, long-lasting light bulbs are fantastic energy and money savers, there is a concern about the trace amounts of mercury used in the lamps ending up in landfills.

Mercury is highly toxic to the human nervous system and particularly poisonous to the kidneys. When lamps are sent to landfills, or especially when incineration is used as a disposal method, mercury vapors are released that can travel more than 200 miles.

But CFLs don't have to be a Catch 22 for your lodging operations.

Pineapple Hospitality, the premier distributor of green products and marketing programs to the hospitality industry, is partnering with AirCycle to provide an easy, efficient way to recycle your used mercury-containing lamps, batteries, ballasts and/or thermostats.



'We have received several requests for this kind of service, especially in light of recent publicity about the small amounts of mercury that is in CFLs,' says Ray Burger, president of Pineapple Hospitality. 'Because the environment has become such an important issue for hoteliers, as well as the country at large, we want to make sure we don't undo some of the positive benefits we get from CFLs by not disposing of them properly.'

'Through our partnership with AirCycle, friends of Pineapple can save 10 percent on the cost of this recycling program. Save money, save the hassle and save the environment. It's a winning program for everyone,' Burger adds.

Through AirCycle's EasyPak Recycling Program, smaller shipments of the disposed materials are shipped through pre-paid FedEx Ground transportation services. The EasyPak program provides everything you need: the container, shipping to the recycling center, recycling fees and certificates of recycling. The program is simple, requires little paperwork, and is a practical option for facilities nationwide.

'With the rise in CFL usage, it's very important that the used lamps be recycled, otherwise, the environmental benefits of the lamp usage is largely negated due to the release of mercury at 'end of life.'" says Scott Beierwaltes, President of Air Cycle Corporation. 'We've definitely seen a dramatic increase in CFL recycling over the past one to two years, from both institutions and companies, as well as private homeowners.'

Sales of CFLs have skyrocketed this decade - doubling last year to about 380 million units after registering just 17,000 CFLs sold in 2000, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. And recycling is less than 1 percent of the total cost of maintaining a lamp over its effective life. It will just take education and programs like EasyPak to help CFL recycling gain traction.

Recycle: It's the Law

Fluorescent light is produced by passing an electric current through mercury vapor, which generates ultraviolet energy. A phosphor coating on the inside of the bulb transforms the ultraviolet energy into visible light. A single four-foot fluorescent tube contains from 5 to 50 mg. of mercury.

Each year, an estimated 600 million fluorescent lamps are disposed of in U.S. landfills amounting to 30,000 pounds of mercury waste. The Environmental Protection Agency reports that 187 incinerators nationwide emit approximately 70,000 total pounds of mercury into the environment each year.

Due to changing federal and state regulations on lamps, most non-residential facilities now are required by law to properly dispose of their lamps. Lamps found in landfills are subject to retroactive clean-up costs under CERCLA. European Union recycling regulations make it unlawful for even EU residents to dispose of CFLs in the trash - a trend that could be coming stateside soon.

Packaging of the CFLs coupled with the recycling of the lamps will greatly reduce the mercury dilemma and create a much safer environment.

'Hotels can benefit from the EasyPak program by not only reducing their liability (in some areas it's illegal to send them to a solid waste landfill and they could be fined), but also can show their employees and guests that they are environmentally sensitive by recycling their lighting,' says Beierwaltes.

'Our program is unique in that we can offer a truly national program that covers both small and large facilities,' he continues. 'Furthermore, we pride ourselves in creating customized solutions that are tailored to the needs of our corporate partners. In some cases, we've built Web sites for our clients that allow them to both procure goods and services, as well as manage participation, track results and report success stories.'

The Best Option

Despite the misinformation or lack of knowledge amongst the public on CFLs, environmentalists and government officials say it is important to balance the positives of CFLs against any negatives, as switching to CFLs is the most cost-effective way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

CFLs use one-quarter to one-fifth the electricity of incandescent bulbs, and can last 10 times longer.

By curtailing the pressure for energy, CFLs can cut pollution from power plants. According to the Union of Concerned Scientists, a coal-fired power plant will emit about four times more mercury to keep an incandescent bulb glowing, compared with a CFL of the same light output.

And the roughly 2 tons of mercury contained in the 380 million CFLs sold in the United States last year was dwarfed by the 50 tons of mercury that U.S. coal plants emitted into the atmosphere.

Each CFL used instead of an incandescent bulb saves the average consumer \$16 a year. With an average of 40 light bulbs in the typical household, changing every bulb could lead to savings of \$640 annually. CFLs also use less electricity than incandescents to produce roughly the same amount of light. Therefore, using CFLs reduces demand on the power grid, as well.

According to the non-profit Efficiency Vermont: 'If everyone in the country replaced just one light bulb, we would conserve enough energy to light more than three million homes for a year, save more than \$600 million in annual energy costs, and prevent greenhouse gases equivalent to the emissions of more than 800,000 cars.'

Now imagine the savings of thousands of lamps in a typical 100-room hotel!



Click and Pick

The EasyPak Program is a simple and easy process that can be followed by your facility's engineering, purchasing or accounting departments.

1. Go to www.LampRecycling.com.
2. Click on 'containers' and choose the container you need from the list.
3. Type in the number in the quantity.
4. Click on 'Add to Cart.'
5. Type in Promotion Code for the 10% discount: PINEAPPLE (all caps).
6. Create New Account / Enter you correct ship to and bill to address.
7. Finish Checkout.

Order as many containers as you need for your facility. The more you buy, the more you save. The EasyPak containers will be shipped to you with a return shipping label to the recycling facility and instructions.

Once the container is full, seal the lid on the bucket, place the bucket within the original box, tape the box closed, fill out the supplied shipping label with your organization's name and address, and attach your pre-paid FedEx shipping label to the box. Ship the container via FedEx Ground to the recycling facility for processing.

In an effort to provide managers the ability to check on the status of all their facilities' EasyPak recycling containers, you can now track all of your containers through LampRecycling.com.

And to make procuring EasyPak containers even easier, AirCycle has developed a process that will automatically order and ship new containers when you need them. There are two available options:

1. For every container received for recycling, a replacement container will automatically be shipped to you.
2. You can also schedule to have "X" amount of containers shipped to any of your facilities. This can be done weekly, monthly, quarterly, or annually based on what you need.

'We're very excited to partner with Pineapple since they are a leader in the hospitality industry and already offer green products and services, as well as general environmental marketing and consulting to much of the industry,' Beierwaltes says. 'We also appreciate their commitment to innovation and customer satisfaction which we value as well.'

In the News

Lighting an Efficient Future, Minus the Mercury - From the Environmental News Network, May 30, 2008:
<http://www.enn.com/energy/article/37111>

To reduce hazardous waste at its source, leading CFL manufacturers have committed to reduce the mercury content of their products. Martin Goetzeler, CEO of Munich-based Osram, said his company aims to cut the mercury content of its CFLs by half in the coming years. 'It should be part of any new technology that hazardous substances are regulated,' he said. 'And we should use the lowest levels [of toxins].'

CFLs presently contain between 2.5 and 3 milligrams of mercury, which Osram will reduce to between 1.3 and 1.8 milligrams, Goetzeler said Wednesday during a talk organized by the Worldwatch Institute.

General Electric is investing in lower-mercury CFL technology as well. 'If we can get [mercury] down to 1 milligram of mercury, that is a big breakthrough,' Lorraine Bolsinger, vice president of GE's ecomagination unit, told reporters last year.

Visit www.enn.com for the complete article.

FAQs

Pineapple Hospitality offers answer to these CFL FAQs on its Web site, www.PineappleHospitality.net:

What should I do if I break a CFL bulb?

Fluorescent lamps contain mercury. Mercury at atmospheric pressure is a silver colored liquid that tends to form balls. Mercury is a hazardous substance. When one lamp is broken, the best thing to do is to wear chemical-resistant gloves to clean it up. The gloves can be vinyl, rubber, PVC or neoprene. The gloves you buy in the supermarket for household cleaning are sufficient. The gloves protect your skin from absorbing mercury and from getting cut by the glass. The remains of one lamp can be disposed as normal waste since the amount of mercury is small. However, for future reference, when large quantities of lamps are being disposed you must follow your state and the federal regulation for disposing of mercury-containing lamps.

Does Pineapple offer a way to dispose of CFLs?

Visit www.LampRecycling.com and enter the code PINEAPPLE (all caps) to receive a 10-percent discount on an EasyPak container which will be sent to your property. You then fill the EasyPak and it is picked up and disposed of properly.

What should I do when my CFL burns out?

EPA recommends that consumers take advantage of local recycling options for compact fluorescent light bulbs, where available. EPA is working with CFL manufacturers and major U.S. retailers to expand disposal options. Consumers can contact their local municipal solid waste agency directly, or go to www.lamprecycle.org and click on 'State Lamp Recycling Regulations & Contacts' to identify local recycling options. CFLs should not be disposed of in an incinerator.

EasyPak Advantages

Minimize storage: When it's full, ship it,

It's pre-paid,

Simplify paperwork: No complicated, expensive manifests,

One order can provide recycling services for an entire year,

Customer service representatives are available to assist you,

Reduces the administrative burden while retaining control of disposal,

Easy ordering process: Order at www.lamprecycling.com or call toll-free 888.640.6700,

Easy-to-follow instructions, complete with illustrations that are printed on the box in English and Spanish,

Minimizes the chance of facility contamination by reducing on-site storage and subsequent accidental breakage and/or leakage.

About Pineapple Hospitality

Headquartered in Saint Charles, Missouri, Pineapple Hospitality(TM) is The Co-Founder and Host of the ANNUAL GREEN HOSPITALITY CONFERENCE, an EPA ENERGY STAR(TM) partner bringing fresh ideas to hospitality guests' doors and owner/operators' bottom lines - including FreshStay(R) (www.freshstay.com), EcoRooms(R) & EcoSuites(TM) (www.EcoRooms.com) Environmentally Sensitive Amenities(TM), EO(R), Neutrogena(R) and greenSPA(TM) amenities and AVIVA dispensers, Energy Efficient Lighting and Controls, Custom Linen & Towel Re-Use Programs, Green Key Cards, Energy Management Systems and Controls, High Performance showerheads, the Nature's Mist(TM) deodorization system, Zero Odor, and dozens of other products and programs. For more information, please visit www.pineapplehospitality.net, or call us at 636-922-2285.

This article comes from Hotel News Resource

<http://www.hotelnewsresource.com>

The URL for this story is:

<http://www.hotelnewsresource.com/article32973.html>

© 1998 - 2008 Nevistas and the author.

Brought to you by Hotel News Resource

Distribute your news on our Network

See what all the buzz is about at:

http://www.hotelnewsresource.com/Info-news_account_info.html