



RAVEN REPORT

March 2014

Fluorescent Bulbs And You: Disposal

Lots of us have fluorescent light bulbs at home and work, whether the long tubes or the newer compact types. A study by Statistics Canada a while ago showed that 75% of Canadian households had at last one CFL bulb in use and 39% had at least 1 fluorescent tube. While the old style incandescent light bulbs, based on the designs of Joseph Swan and Thomas Edison, can be disposed of in a landfill without much trouble, the same cannot be said of fluorescents. Fluorescent lights contain mercury vapour mixed with inert gases, over time the mercury will be absorbed into the glass and other components of the bulb. Generally most of it is absorbed by the time the bulb is no longer in use but it is still there. Mercury, or quicksilver as it is also known, is liquid at room temperature making it a unique metal. It is also poisonous, giving rise to the

line "Your beloved husband-to-be, so anxious to be worthy of your love, drank a potion of quicksilver and sulphur, the elixir of life and eternal youth, and expired on the spot" in "Assassin at Peking", 1964. Mercury can leach out of landfills and enter the environment causing health hazards to all number of animals. Fish are particularly prone to absorbing and storing mercury which is then absorbed by eating the fish. It's fairly obvious then that mercury is not something we want floating around in the environment at higher levels than exists naturally. What is concerning is the same Statistics Canada study showed that half of the households studied used an "uncontrolled" method of disposing of their fluorescent bulbs, more commonly known as "throwing it in the garbage". Fluorescent bulbs are a hazardous waste and should never be tossed in the garbage, left by the side of the road or used as substitute lightsabers. They can be stored up and taken to household hazardous waste days. There is very little mercury in a CFL bulb, about five thousandths of a gram, but add up all the bulbs in the Yukon and that amounts to a lot of poisonous material.

Raven cannot currently accept fluorescents for recycling but it is a possibility for the future. In the meantime please store your bulbs safely until Household Hazardous Waste days and maybe approach your MLA about a Yukon-wide strategy for recycling them.



If you're involved in a community event and want some help with recycling then the Ravin' Raven is available to help. The trailer comes with bins and bags for recycling, compost and that stuff that just has to go in the landfill. Provided the trailer is returned to us in one piece and clean, there's no charge for the service, though we do take a deposit. Call Steve at Raven for more details or to book the Ravin' Raven.

RECYCLING CLUB NEWS

Here's some advanced warning for you. The first day to collect points for the 2014 Recycling Club will be SATURDAY 17TH MAY. Leaf Solutions will have all the details for you once again this year.



RAVEN RECYCLING
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