

**Media Contact**

Scott Cassel
Product Stewardship Institute, Inc.
617-236-4822
scott@productstewardship.us

**Environmental Agencies Enforce Fluorescent
Lamp-Related Violations**
*PSI Encourages Companies and Institutions to Ensure Safe Handling of this
Environmental Hazard*

BOSTON, May 19, 2009 – Numerous states are holding corporate and institutional violators of fluorescent lamp handling requirements accountable for their actions. The Product Stewardship Institute (PSI) commends the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and state governments for taking these violations seriously. While EPA and other agencies recommend that all mercury-containing lamps be recycled, requirements vary state to state, and some residents may not be aware of bans on the disposal of such products that have been enacted in California, Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New York, Rhode Island, and Vermont, with an incinerator ban in Florida.

“Recycling requirements vary from state to state. Almost every state requires recycling of certain lamps used in large quantities, but some states require recycling of all fluorescent lamps,” said Scott Cassel, PSI’s Executive Director. “While the regulations may be varied and can be confusing, it is important for the environment that all fluorescent lamps get recycled.”

In the past year, EPA has penalized groups ranging from Macy’s Inc. in New York City to the General Services Administration in the U.S. Virgin Islands for improper disposal of fluorescent lamps. Macy’s Inc. has since updated its internal protocol to properly recycle fluorescent lamps. States have been active as well. The New York Department of Environmental Conservation’s settlement with CBS for improper disposal of lamps included an agreement that the Late Show with David Letterman include a public service announcement about using and recycling CFLs on the show’s webpage.

“There is adequate recycling capacity and a network of lamp and mercury recyclers across the country that can help large and small generators set up a compliant recycling program,” said Paul Abernathy of the Association of Lighting and Mercury Recyclers.

Lighting manufacturers who are members of the National Electrical Manufacturers Association publicly encourage proper disposal of mercury-containing lamps.

Fluorescent lamps contain mercury, a naturally occurring toxin that can affect the nervous system. Although no mercury is released when these products are in use or intact, when disposed of in the trash, crushed, incinerated, or otherwise broken, they can cause mercury to be released to

*Product Stewardship Institute, Inc. • 137 Newbury Street • 7th Floor • Boston, MA 02116
Telephone: (617) 236-4855 • Fax: (617) 859-9889 • www.productstewardship.us*

the environment. Mercury-containing lamps should all be recycled so the mercury is captured and not released to the atmosphere.

The use of fluorescent lamps has increased in the last few years with rising energy costs driving consumers to purchase the energy efficient light bulbs. These lamps not only use less energy than traditional incandescent bulbs but also last up to 13 times longer. Because they require less energy to produce light, fluorescent lamp use significantly reduces the amount of greenhouse gas and other emissions from power plants. Historically, about 670 million fluorescent lamps have been disposed of each year and it is estimated that less than 30% have been recycled overall, although the consumer sector recycling rate is estimated at only about 2%.

PSI is running a national, multi-stakeholder dialogue to develop and implement strategies to promote the use of energy efficient lighting while eliminating or reducing the amount of mercury and other toxins entering the environment during the lifecycle of fluorescent lamps.

To find a lamp recycler near you, please see the Association for Lighting and Mercury Recyclers at <http://almr.org/map.html>. For information on the applicable regulations in your state, see: <http://www.almr.org/statebystate.html>. (Note that some local jurisdictions have their own requirements as well.) Consumers can find drop-off sites for used lamps at <http://www.earth911.org>. The announcement on the Late Show with David Letterman can be found at: http://lateshow.cbs.com/latenight/lateshow/video_player/index/php/966342.phtml.

The Product Stewardship Institute (PSI) is a national environmental institute with membership from 45 states, over 100 local government agencies, and more than 50 businesses, environmental groups, and other organizations that works to reduce the health and environmental impacts from consumer products. For more information, please see: www.productstewardship.us.

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