CLEANUP OF BROKEN FLUORESCENT LIGHTS AND HID LAMPS
NYC DEP EHS GUIDANCE
EFFECTIVE 3/1/13

Overview

This document provides guidance on how to respond when fluorescent lights or High Intensity Discharge (HID) lamps (e.g., mercury vapor, high pressure sodium, and metal halide) break or when broken bulbs are found. Broken bulbs contain small amounts of mercury in both vapor and particulate form and are considered hazardous waste and should be labeled, stored and disposed of in the same manner as other hazardous waste (see DEP Hazardous Waste Management policy). While the amount of mercury in these bulbs is very small, it is important to avoid spreading the residues and to clean-up the broken bulb as soon as it is discovered.

If You Discover a Broken Lamp:

1. The first step always is to notify your supervisor or Contract Supervisor. It doesn't matter if the bulb just broke or if an old broken bulb has just been found.
2. Isolate the area around the broken material so that mercury powder is not tracked or spread to other areas. Stop nearby activities that could mobilize the powder, and keep the spill area off-limits until cleaned up.
3. Contact your EHS representative if you want additional guidance on the cleanup of broken bulbs.

Cleanup of Broken Lamps:

1. Wear disposable latex or nitrile gloves during the cleanup. Do not touch uncontaminated items with the gloves after the gloves have come into contact with the mercury powder or broken bulbs. Never use bare hands to pick up the pieces!
2. Pick up the broken glass, and place the pieces in a puncture-resistant container. Use tweezers or disposable cardboard to safely pick up large pieces of broken glass.
3. Unless your facility has a Mercury vacuum on-site, **NEVER** vacuum lamps; you will simply spread the mercury vapor and dust. A Mercury vacuum has special filters (HEPA and carbon) that an ordinary shop vacuum does not have, to prevent spreading fine particles and vapor. If a Mercury vacuum is not available, or if there is residual powder after Mercury vacuuming, the remaining powder residue should be gently removed using damp cloths or damp heavy duty paper towels. A wet cloth or rag will work best to collect and clean up any spilled powder from the

lamp without spreading the powder.

4. Carefully remove the gloves by turning them inside out to take them off. This will trap any mercury powder remaining on the gloves.
5. Let the area air dry, and if it is a confined space, thoroughly ventilate the spill area using outside air.

Storing and Disposing of Broken Lamps:

1. Broken bulbs should be stored in the facility Hazardous Waste Storage Area, in a closed container that will not be punctured by broken glass. Plastic bags are not considered puncture-resistant (e.g., if a plastic bag is used to collect the glass pieces, an additional container is required). The storage container should have a Hazardous Waste label and be managed as Hazardous Waste.
2. If a broken bulb is discovered in a container with intact used bulbs, the intact bulbs should be removed and stored separately along with other Universal Wastes. The container with the broken bulb should be managed as Hazardous Waste.
3. Manage all cleanup materials (e.g., gloves, cardboard, and cloths) in a separate, sturdy, sealed plastic or cardboard container for waste characterization.

REMEMBER:

A broken bulb does not belong in the regular trash can.

Broken bulbs are considered Hazardous Waste.

Containers holding broken bulbs should only be stored in the Hazardous Waste Storage Area.