

## What if I accidentally break a fluorescent bulb?

- The most important thing to remember is to *never* use a vacuum. A standard vacuum will spread mercury containing dust throughout the area as well as contaminating the vacuum.
- Ventilate the area.
- If possible, reduce the temperature.
- Wear appropriate personal protective equipment, such as gloves, safety glasses, coveralls and respiratory protection.
- Carefully remove the larger pieces and place them in a secure container.
- Next, begin collecting the smaller pieces and dust. There are several ways to do this. You can use a disposable broom and dustpan, two stiff pieces of paper or one of the many commercial mercury spill kits available.
- Put all material into a plastic bag. Pat the area with duct tape. Wipe the area with a damp cloth.
- Put all waste and materials used to clean up the bulb in a secure container and label it "Universal Waste".
- Send the container for recycling along with your next shipment of universal wastes.



## Where can I get more information on Universal Wastes?

More information on Universal Wastes, including a list of companies that transport, consolidate and recycle Universal Wastes, can be found at the Department's Website at <http://www.maine.gov/dep/rwm/hazardouswaste.htm>. Help is also available through the DEP office nearest you.

Augusta  
17 State House Station  
Ray Bldg., Hospital St.  
Augusta, ME 04333-0017  
(207) 287-2651 Fax (207) 287-7826

Bangor  
106 Hogan Rd  
Bangor, ME 04401  
(207)941-4570 Fax (207) 941-4584

Portland  
312 Canco Rd  
Portland, ME 04103  
(207) 822-6300 Fax (207) 822-6303

Presque Isle  
1235 Central Dr, Skyway Park  
Presque Isle, ME 04769-2094  
(207) 764-0477 Fax (207) 764-1507

# What your business, governmental agency or organization needs to know about Universal Waste

## What are Universal Wastes?

Universal Wastes are wastes that contain hazardous materials such as mercury, lead, and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCB).

## Examples include:

- ✓ CRTs—Cathode Ray Tubes (computer monitors, TVs)
- ✓ Fluorescent lamps (also mercury vapor, neon, metal halide, HID and HPS)
- ✓ Mercury-containing thermostats
- ✓ Intact PCB-containing lighting ballasts
- ✓ Certain Batteries (Ni-Cd, metal hydride, lithium...)
- ✓ Mercury thermometers

## Who generates Universal Wastes?

Everyone! Businesses, municipalities, schools, and households. That's why they're called "universal" wastes.



## Why should we care about Universal Wastes?

Because of the health and environmental risks involved. Each product categorized as a Universal Waste contains one or more hazardous constituents. When these products are broken, landfilled or incinerated, the toxic components are released to the air, water and land. In our environment, they pose health risks that persist over time. Children and other critical populations, like nursing mothers, are especially vulnerable.

## How should we handle Universal Waste?

Through recycling. Recycling Universal Waste helps to reduce the amount of toxic substances going to trash incinerators and landfills.

## How do Maine's Universal Waste regulations ensure safer handling?

- *They keep Universal Waste out of the conventional solid waste stream.* Under the rules, Universal Wastes must be segregated so that *most* of their hazardous constituents can be recovered through recycling. The one exception is PCB ballasts; these are not recycled, but must be sent for disposal according to a *different* set of regulations (the Hazardous Waste Management Rules).
- *They protect against exposure due to breakage.* Universal Waste must be properly packaged, labeled and stored in a secure area to control access and prevent accidental breakage. In addition, no entity other than an *authorized hazardous waste recycling facility* can intentionally break cathode ray tubes or fluorescent lamps.

- *They require documentation of site storage.* You can store universal wastes for 365 days or, 90 days from filling a container, whichever is longer.
- *There may be notification requirements.* Generators of 200 or less items of universal waste are small quantity universal waste generators. Generators accumulating more than 200 items of Universal Waste at any one time or in any given month must provide notification to DEP. When determining the total number, all types of universal waste are added together.
- *They require training on safe handling.* Employees and contractors who handle Universal Wastes must receive training to ensure that they can keep themselves safe and properly manage the wastes.
- *They require documentation of shipments.* Waste shipments must be tracked on appropriate paper work.
- *They require safe transport.* Transporters must meet specific requirements before they can handle universal wastes. If a generator wishes to "Self Transport", he or she must also meet certain requirements. You may also use a manufacturer take back program.

## Can a municipal solid waste facility accept Universal Waste from businesses?

Yes, If they are properly set up to handle Universal Waste in a special storage area. If so, businesses would then self transport the waste to the local transfer station and complete or make sure the transfer attendant completes the incoming waste log at the transfer facility.

## Is a municipal solid waste facility required to accept Universal Wastes from businesses?

No. Municipalities are required to provide for disposal of domestic and commercial solid wastes generated within the municipality. *CRT's, lamps, mercury containing thermostats, PCB ballasts and certain batteries generated by commercial entities* are hazardous wastes. Therefore, a municipality has no legal obligation to provide for recycling or disposal of these wastes from *commercial* entities. Just like every other business, however municipalities are responsible for managing hazardous wastes, including Universal Waste, from their own properties. (See next section regarding certain wastes generated by households.)

## Are there new waste management responsibilities everyone should know about?

Yes. Maine law prohibits the disposal of mercury-added products. Businesses are already required to recycle mercury-containing lamps, thermostats and thermometers as Universal Waste; they also must recycle CRT's, PCB ballasts and certain batteries. But after January 1, 2005, even non-commercial generators must separate lamps, and mercury containing thermostats, thermometers, switches, relays, and medical or scientific instruments from their routine trash. This means that by January 1, 2005, municipalities must provide a system for household and residents to recycle these mercury-containing products.