



Live Smart. Live Green. Live Well.

Keep green in your pocket and on the planet while adding comfort at home.

Energy Star Compact Fluorescent Light bulbs (CFL)

Why should I purchase CFLs?

CFLs, when compared with standard incandescent bulbs, offer many benefits. First, they help save energy and money. They use 2/3 less energy than standard incandescent light bulbs, and last up to 10 times longer. Second, CFLs offer convenience, because they last longer, and come in different sizes and shapes to fit almost any fixture. In addition, CFLs produce about 70% less heat than standard incandescent bulbs, so they're safer to operate and can help cut energy costs associated with home cooling. When shopping, always look for ENERGY STAR qualified CFLs.

What do I need to know about CFLs?

CFLs contain a very small amount of mercury sealed within the glass tubing—an average of 5 milligrams (roughly equivalent to the tip of a ball-point pen). Mercury is an essential, irreplaceable element in CFLs and is what allows the bulb to be an efficient light source. By comparison, older home thermometers contain 500 milligrams of mercury and many manual thermostats contain up to 3000 milligrams. It would take between 100 and 600 CFLs to equal those amounts. There is currently no substitute for mercury in CFLs; however, manufacturers have taken significant steps to reduce mercury used in their fluorescent lighting products over the past decade. In Jacksonville, you must treat CFLs as Hazardous Household Waste and dispose of accordingly.

What are my options in CFLs?

CFLs come in many different sizes and shapes to fit almost all of your lighting needs. Here is a quick list of some common types available:

- Candelabra Light
- Bug Light
- Globe Light
- Spotlights
- Floodlights (indoor and outdoor)
- Faux Incandescent

What should I look for in a CFL?

Just remember your ABCs! There are three main characteristics of a CFL that you must be aware of to maximize its use.

1. Application—Make sure the CFL you choose is rated for the application you seek. Special bulbs are required for 3-way, dimmable and outdoor fixtures for example.
2. Brightness—The light output, measured in Lumens, needs to be relatively close to the light output of the incandescent light that you are replacing. The light output is usually marked on the CFL packaging for your reference.
3. Color—CFLs give off a variety of different light colors. The color that the bulb gives off is related to the Kelvin temperature at which the bulb burns. The three main colors are generally categorized as “soft white” (around 2700k), “bright white” (around 3500k) and “day light” (around 5500k). The “soft white” gives off a yellow hue while the “day light” gives off more of a blue hue with “bright white” being somewhere in the middle.

How much is a CFL going to save me?

Most people are initially put off by CFLs because of the price. Where a typical 13 watt CFL can cost around \$2.50 per bulb the 60 watt incandescent it will replace only costs around \$0.40. However, in a typical application, you would have to replace the incandescent bulb 10 times before the CFL. Therefore, the total savings would be \$1.50 in purchasing cost and at least \$30 in energy costs over the life of the bulb. In addition, according to Energy Star, every CFL can prevent more than 450 pounds of emissions from a power plant over its lifetime.

For more information visit the conservation section of our website or contact us via email at conservation@jea.com.