Proper Disposal of Light Bulbs at Cornell University’s Ithaca Campus

April 16, 2014

Purpose

Used lamps containing mercury are a regulated waste by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYS DEC). All staff who handle used lamps at Cornell University must be aware that:

- Non-broken mercury-containing lamps are a Universal Waste
- Broken mercury-containing lamps are a Hazardous Waste
- There are strict guidelines for generators of this waste
- Violations of DEC regulations lead to fines

All staff who handle used lamps at Cornell University must:

- Understand the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYS DEC) terminology
- Understand the difference between Hazardous Waste lamps and Universal Waste lamps
- Learn how to properly dispose of waste lamps

Terminology

HAZARDOUS WASTE: is a regulatory term meaning waste that poses substantial or potential threats to public health or the environment.

UNIVERSAL WASTE: is a Hazardous Waste which falls under the NYDEC Universal Waste Rule. This rule is designed to reduce the amount of hazardous waste in the municipal solid waste stream, to encourage the recycling and proper disposal of some common hazardous wastes and to reduce the regulatory burden on generators.

LAMP: Light Bulb

SATALITE ACCUMULATION AREA: Is a regulatory term meaning the area where the Universal Waste Recycle containers are located.

ACCUMULATION START DATE: Is a regulatory term meaning the date the first light bulb is placed in a recycle box/bin.

LARGE QUANTITY HANDLER: is a regulatory status which is a NYSDEC designation based on the quantity of waste an organization generates. Cornell’s Ithaca Campus is a Large Quantity Handler and as such is subject to strict regulations regarding Universal Waste and Hazardous Waste.

CFL’S: Compact Florescent Light Bulb

Proper Disposal of Universal Waste Non-Broken Lamps

All Unbroken lamps which are being disposed of from Cornell University Ithaca campus are collected through an existing system managed by the R5 Operations Department in Facilities Services, and are sent for recycling/reclamation. The rules listed below for Universal Waste Lamps ensure compliance with NYSDEC regulations; violations of NYSDEC regulations lead to fines.

All staff collecting Universal Waste Lamps must complete the Lamp Waste Training available jointly by Cornell’s R5 Operations Department and Cornell’s department of Environmental Health and Safety. To schedule a training email recycle@cornell.edu, or call 607-254-1666.
The following rules apply for containers used to collect Universal Waste Lamps:

- NON-BROKEN Lamps only may be placed in containers for Universal Waste Lamps (non-broken lamps)
- Lamps must be placed in properly labeled container
  - Label must state: “Universal Waste Lamps”
  - Pre-printed labels (example below) are available from the R5 Operations Department. To request labels contact R5 Operations by email at recycle@cornell.edu, or by phone at 607-254-1666.
- Accumulation start date must be marked
- Container must be stored closed at all times
- DO NOT force lamps into the container
- Container for Universal Waste Lamps may not be stored in excess of one year from Accumulation Start Date. Contact R5 Operations to schedule a pickup when date deadline is approaching.

Tips:
- Remove old packaging constituents from box
- Consider separating small lamps from tubes
- Universal Waste containers may be varied sizes. Use best size container to ensure lids are easily closed and possible incidental breakage to lamps is reduced.

Example of Pre-Printed Universal Waste Lamps label:

![Universal Waste: Non-Broken Lamps Only](image)

Proper Disposal of Hazardous Waste Broken Lamps

All broken lamps which are being disposed of from Cornell University are collected through an existing system managed by the R5 Operations Department in Facilities Services. The rules listed below for Hazardous Waste Lamps ensure compliance with NYSDEC regulations; violations of NYSDEC regulations lead to fines.

All staff collecting Hazardous Waste Lamps must complete the Lamp Waste Training available jointly by Cornell’s R5 Operations Department and Cornell’s department of Environmental Health and Safety. To schedule a training email recycle@cornell.edu, or call 607-254-1666.
The following rules apply for containers used to collect Hazardous Waste Lamps:

- BROKEN Lamps and pieces ONLY may be placed in containers for Hazardous Waste Lamps (broken lamps)
- Lamps must be placed in properly labeled container:
  - Label must state: “Hazardous Waste – Broken Lamps”
  - Pre-printed labels (example below) are available from the R5 Operations Department. To request labels contact R5 Operations by email at recycle@cornell.edu, or by phone at 607-254-1666.
- DO NOT force lamp into container
- Container must be closed at all times
- Bulb must be placed in broken bulb container for the facility in which the bulb was broken.
- Containers with Hazardous Waste – Broken Lamps shall not be moved from the Satellite Accumulation area unless by Cornell University R5 Operations staff or Cornell University Environmental Health and Safety staff.

Example of Pre-Printed Universal Waste Lamps label:

![Hazardous Waste: Broken Lamps Only](image)

REMINDER: Violations of NYSDEC regulations lead to fines.

To request labels, posters, trainings, or a pickup of bulbs on Cornell’s Ithaca campus, call R5 Operations Department at 607-254-1666, or email recycle@cornell.edu.

More information regarding recycling and waste management at Cornell University is available at http://r5.fs.cornell.edu.

IMPORTANT: This document is specific to Cornell’s Ithaca Campus. For information related to Cornell’s remote facilities, please call R5 Operations Department at 607-254-1666, or email recycle@cornell.edu.