



Harrison Rural Electrification Association, Inc.

RR 6, Box 502
Clarksburg, WV 26301-0502
304-624-6365

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 
www.harrisonrea.com

Facts about mercury in CFLs

Compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs) use much less energy and last longer than standard incandescent bulbs, but they do contain mercury. While that may sound a bit alarming, there's no need to worry.

The amount of mercury inside the glass tubes of an average CFL is very little — about the equivalent of what fits on the tip of a ballpoint pen — and it's especially small when compared to other items you may have around your home. The amount of mercury in a CFL runs about 4-5 milligrams (mg), while a glass fever thermometer contains 500 mg and an old-style thermostat could contain up to 3,000 mg.

CFLs are safe to handle and use in your home, and they release no mercury when in operation. Even if you break a CFL, the amount of mercury that may become air-

borne poses a very low risk of exposure. When CFLs burn out or break, you should recycle them.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) considers CFLs household hazardous waste (HHW), but there's no federal requirement that the bulbs be recycled. There are several HHW recycling centers; some hardware stores and other retailers may have CFL recycling buckets on hand.

To find out if there's a facility or store near you that accepts CFLs, go to the Earth 911 website at www.earth911.org, or call 800-CLEANUP.

If one of these recycling options is not available to you, you may put burned out or broken CFLs in a sealed plastic bag and place it with your regular trash. If a CFL breaks, the EPA says to open nearby windows to disperse any vapor that may escape, and care-

Manager's Corner

by
Gary Jackson,
CEO/General
Manager



fully sweep up the glass shards. (Don't use your bare hands!)

Wipe the area with a damp paper towel to remove glass fragments; don't use a vacuum cleaner. Put the fragments, the base of the bulb, and the paper towel in a sealed plastic bag, and place it with your regular trash.

CFLs are a great idea. They'll help you cut your utility bills, and they'll help reduce the need for electricity production. However, to create the maximum benefit for the environment, recycling burned-out and broken CFLs makes sense.

Board of Directors

C.B. Sharp, Dist. 1.....President
James Stuart, Dist. 4.....Vice President
Darrell Powell, Dist. 6.....Secy.-Treas.
Greg Robertson.....Dist. 2 Kent Vance.....Dist. 3
Ron Watson.....Dist. 5 Michael Cross.....Dist. 7

Gary L. Jackson, General Manager
Terry Stout.....Office Manager
Alan Cox.....Operations Manager
Richard L. Fox.....Staking Engineer
Nada McNemar.....Editor

Office Hours
7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., Mon.-Fri.



*Harrison Rural
Electric Association*

will be closed on

Friday, Dec. 23, Monday Dec. 26,

and Monday, Jan. 2.

*to allow our employees to celebrate
the holidays with their families.*

We wish you a merry Christmas and a happy New Year!



The Christmas stocking

A Christmas stocking is an empty sock or sock-shaped bag that children hang on Christmas Eve so that Santa Claus can fill it with small toys, candy, fruit, coins or other small gifts when he arrives. These small items are often referred to as stocking stuffers or stocking fillers. In some Christmas stories, the contents of the Christmas stocking are the only toys the child receives at Christmas from Santa Claus; in other stories (and in tradition), some presents are also wrapped up in wrapping paper and placed under the Christmas tree. According to tradition in Western culture, a child who behaves badly during the year will receive only a piece of coal. However, coal is rarely if ever left in a stocking, as it is considered cruel.

While there are no written records of the origin of the Christmas stocking, there are popular legends that attempt to tell the history of this Christmas tradition. One such legend has several variations, but the following is a good example: Very long ago, there lived a poor man and his three very beautiful daughters. He had no money to get his daughters married, and he was worried what would happen to them after his death.

Saint Nicholas was passing through when he heard the villagers talking about the girls. Saint Nicholas wanted to help but knew that the old man wouldn't accept charity. He decided to help in secret. He waited until it was night and crept through the chimney.

He had three bags of gold coins with him, one for each girl. As he was looking for a place to put those three bags, he noticed stockings of the three girls that were hung over the mantelpiece for drying. He put one bag in each stocking and off he went. When the girls and their father woke up the next morning, they found the bags of gold coins and were, of course, overjoyed. The girls were able to get married and live happily ever after.

This led to the custom of children hanging stockings or putting out shoes, eagerly awaiting gifts from Saint Nicholas. Sometimes in the story gold balls are used instead of bags of gold. That is why three gold balls, sometimes represented as oranges, are one of the symbols for Saint Nicholas. And so Saint Nicholas is a gift-giver.

In a tradition that originally began in a European country, children simply used one of their everyday socks, but eventually special Christmas stockings were created for this purpose. The Christmas stocking custom is derived from the Germanic figure Odin. According to legend, children would place their boots, filled with carrots, straw, or sugar, near the chimney for Odin's flying horse, Sleipnir, to eat. Odin would reward those children for their kindness by replacing Sleipnir's food with gifts or candy. This practice survived in Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands after the adoption of Christianity and became associated with Saint Nicholas as a result of the process of Christianization. Today, stores carry a large variety of styles and sizes of Christmas stockings, and many families create their own Christmas stockings with each family member's name applied to the stocking so that Santa will know which stocking belongs to which family member.

The World's Biggest Christmas Stocking was created by supporters of the Children's Society in December 2007. Guinness World Records awarded the stocking the title of the Largest Christmas Stocking on December 14, 2007, at ExCel in London. It was made out of more than 6,000 squares of red knitting and measured 32.56 meters long and 14.97 meters wide (heel to toe). It weighed the equivalent of three reindeer and was filled with 1,000 presents, which were then given to children in the Children's Society's projects.

Source: Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia



Energy Efficiency

Tip of the Month

During the holiday season, consider using ENERGY STAR-qualified lights and strands to decorate. They use 70 percent less energy than regular lights and last up to 10 times as long. They also give off less heat, reducing the risk of fire.

Source: U.S. Department of Energy

Giving the gift of efficiency

BY BRIAN SLOBODA,
COOPERATIVE RESEARCH NETWORK

Holiday decorating can cause spikes in your January electric bill. One great way to keep your light displays from breaking the bank is to invest in light-emitting diodes, or LEDs.

LED holiday lights are:

- **Energy efficient.** They use 70 percent less energy than traditional incandescent light strings.
- **Long-lasting.** They boast a lifespan up to 10 times longer than incandescent lamps.
- **Safe.** They stay cool to the touch, reducing the risk of fire.
- **Sturdy.** Bulbs are made of epoxy, not glass, making them much more durable than other lights.

LED holiday lights come in a wide variety of colors, shapes and lengths and are available at many home improvement, wholesale, drug and grocery stores. Although LEDs might be more expensive than incandescent lights at the time of purchase, energy savings over their life make them a big money saver. And prices continue to fall as the technology becomes less expensive. At HomeDepot.com, you can get a 50-count strand of white lights or multicolored lights for around \$12.

The brightness and color of LED lights have also come a long way over the last few years. For white lights, you can choose between cool white (a bright icy-blue white) or warm white (a yellow tint that's the closest to a white incandescent replacement).

Make sure the lights you buy are labeled for indoor or outdoor use, depending on where you want to place them. Decorating outside with in-

door lights can shorten the life of the bulbs.

For even more energy savings, use a timer to turn on holiday lights from 6 to 10 p.m.

When purchasing your lights, make sure the packaging bears the Underwriters Laboratories (UL) label. That means an independent testing group has thoroughly checked the product for safety hazards such as fire and shock.

One more thing to keep an eye out for involves lumen output of the lights. Traditionally, light bulbs have been based on their power use — or how many watts they consume. Beginning in January 2012, all light bulbs will carry a label showing the lumens of the bulb, or how bright it is.

More lumens means a brighter light; fewer lumens, a dimmer light.

Careful shopping can save money on the monthly electric bill while giving your loved ones — and the neighborhood — a festive holiday display.

Brian Sloboda is a senior program manager specializing in energy efficiency for the Cooperative Research Network, a service of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. Additional content was provided by E Source.



Try LED light strands — they consume far less energy and last up to 10 times as long as traditional incandescent lights.

Source: GE

Top 10 energy-saving tips for a happy holiday season

10. Shop for ENERGY STAR-rated appliances and compact fluorescent light bulbs
9. Skip the electronics and get kids board games
8. Do not preheat your oven when cooking large pieces of meat
7. Lower thermostats and replace HVAC filters every 30 days
6. Check windows and doors for leaks and seal them
5. Install timers on outdoor lighting displays
4. Decorate with LEDs
3. Adjust power settings on video game consoles to the power-saving feature
2. Vanquish energy vampires with a smart power strip
1. Follow Scrooge's example: Skip the holidays! (Not recommended for children, of course!)

Avoid a holiday decorating disaster

Few traditions are as unique to the holidays as festooning our homes and yards with twinkling lights and festive decorations. While these displays add to the magic of the season, they also increase our risks

for holiday fires and injuries. So follow these steps to ensure that your traditions result in a safe, bright and happy time for your family.

Carefully inspect each electrical decoration and extension cord before use, and discard any damaged items. Cracked sockets, bare or frayed wires, and loose connections may cause a serious

shock or fire. Avoid overloading outlets, which can overheat and also cause a fire.

The Electrical Safety Foundation International recommends never connecting more than three strands of incandescent lights together. Do not pinch cords in windows or doors or under heavy furniture.

When decorating outside, make sure outdoor outlets are equipped with ground-fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs). Check that all items and extension cords are marked for outdoor use. And exercise extreme caution when decorating near overhead power lines. Use a wooden or fiberglass ladder instead of metal. Keep yourself and all of your equipment at least 10 feet from power lines.

Take special care with Christmas trees. If purchasing a live tree, check for freshness. Heated rooms dry out live trees — even fresh ones — rapidly. Place the tree at least three feet away from all heat sources, including fireplaces and space heaters. Be sure to keep the stand filled with water. For artificial trees, look for the label “fire resistant.”

Decorate your tree, live or artificial, with non-combustible or flame-resistant materials. Never use burning candles on or near your tree.

Whether your house is the most festive on the block or you prefer a more low-key style, make safety an important part of your holiday preparations.

Source: Electrical Safety Foundation International



Check to make sure connections are secure and cords are not worn or frayed.
Source: Underwriters Laboratories (UL)

Healthy holiday eating

BY JENNIFER NELSON, M.S., R.D.
AND KATHERINE ZERATSKY, R.D

Are dreams of sugarplums dancing in your head? What about other decadent holiday favorites? You know, the ones that are loaded with sugar, salt and fat — cheese platters, bacon-wrapped appetizers, creamy eggnogs, spiked punches, cookies and rich desserts.

It can be a challenging time of year to make healthy choices. But healthy holiday eating is possible. Here are some tips for making favorite recipes healthier:

- **Cut the sweetness.** When making pumpkin pie or eggnog, reduce the amount of sugar by half and enhance “sweetness” by adding a bit more vanilla, nutmeg or cinnamon. If recipes call for sugary toppings like frosting, jams and syrup, use fresh fruit instead.

- **Shake the salt out.** You can reduce salt by half in most recipes, too. Also go easy on salty condiments, such as pickles, catsup, mustard and soy sauce. Instead, offer cucumber slices

and fresh tomato or fruit salsas. Or try lower-sodium versions of mustard and soy sauce. In recipes, substitute fresh herbs and flavored vinegars for salt.

- **Trim the fat.** In baked goods you can cut the fat by about half and replace it with unsweetened applesauce, prune puree or mashed banana. Instead of full-fat condensed milk, use condensed skim milk in pumpkin pie and eggnog. For gravy, heat fat-free, low-sodium broth (or drippings with the fat removed); mix flour into cold skim milk and pour slowly into broth, stir until thickened and season to your liking.

Do you have tips for healthy holiday eating? How about suggestions for healthy hors d'oeuvres, sides and entrees? Share your ideas for transforming traditional holiday recipes into fresher, healthier ones.

Copyright: 2011 Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research. All rights reserved.