



Buncombe County's Fluorescent Bulb Recycling Program

Overview

Buncombe County's fluorescent bulb recycling program began as a result of a citizen's concern over the amount of mercury in fluorescent bulbs and how it might contaminate the landfill or possibly the local water supply. Recognizing the potential environmental liability posed by accepting mercury-containing bulbs, the County budgeted funds to pay for a fluorescent bulb recycling program. Residents may drop off their bulbs at 12 fire stations across the county for safe handling and collection. The County contracts with a hazardous waste collection firm to recycle the bulbs.

Implementation

Fluorescent bulb collection stations are located at each of 12 fire departments across the County. The county purchases specialized containers for the temporary storage of ballasts and bulbs. These containers are approved by the NCDOT for safe transportation of the materials.



Keys to Success

A major key to success is the Solid Waste Department's partnership with the local Fire Departments. Fire Department staff are required to have emergency response and hazardous waste certifications, qualifying them to handle the fluorescent bulbs.

Recycling Program Results

Over 7,514 pounds of bulbs have been recycled since the program began in 2007. In 2009, Buncombe County recycled 11,263 fluorescent bulbs and ballast at a cost of \$1.00 per 8' ballast and \$0.75 for each 4' tube and CFL. These figures include transportation and staff time.

Type of Facility:

Local Government

Recycling Since:

The fluorescent tube recycling program started in January 2007.

Recycles:

Buncombe County recycles all materials commonly accepted in local government recycling program. The Fluorescent Bulb Recycling Program targets fluorescent ballasts and compact fluorescent bulbs (CFLs).

Cost of Recycling Program:

\$60,000 first year, approximately \$40,000 annually to pay for containers, shipping, and processing.

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