



## Fluorescent and HID Lamps Hazardous Waste Lamp Management

The accumulation of mercury in the environment and the food chain is a serious environmental and health hazard. On July 6, 1999, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) published a final rule in the Federal Register that added hazardous waste lamps to the Universal Waste Rule (64 FR 36465 - 36490). The rule was adopted by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC). Prior to adoption into regulations, the use of the universal waste rule for hazardous waste lamps in New York State was allowed from January 6, 2000 through the use of an Enforcement Directive.

Generators of hazardous waste lamps may choose between handling their lamps under the traditional regulatory scheme or as universal wastes. To facilitate compliance with New York State's Mercury Added Consumer Products Law, low mercury lamps may also be handled under the universal waste rule. However, once lamps are declared to be universal wastes, they must continue to be handled as universal wastes. (Jumping back and forth between the traditional RCRA approach and the universal waste rule to avoid any requirements is prohibited.) A handler of hazardous waste lamps who fails to comply with the New York state universal waste rule may be considered to be in violation of hazardous waste laws and regulations. Under New York State's Universal Waste Rule, 6 NYCRR Part 364 Waste Transporter requirements are still applicable, requiring a waste transporter permit for transporters carrying more than 500 pounds of universal wastes.

### Universal Waste Rule

To streamline environmental regulations for wastes generated by numerous sources in relatively small quantities, USEPA issued the Universal Waste Rule in 1995. 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. For hazardous waste lamps, this rule has been available for use in New York State since January 6, 2000.

Universal wastes include such items as hazardous batteries, hazardous mercury-containing thermostats, certain pesticides, and hazardous lamps. Universal wastes are generated not only in the industrial settings usually associated with hazardous wastes, but also in a wide variety of other settings, including households, schools, office buildings, and medical facilities. Although handlers of universal wastes must meet less stringent standards for storing, transporting, and collecting wastes, the wastes must comply with full hazardous waste requirements for final recycling, treatment, or disposal. This approach helps to remove these wastes from municipal landfills and incinerators, providing stronger safeguards for public health and the environment.

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