

# IN THE LOOP!

Free newsletter of MassRecycle, the Massachusetts Recycling Coalition

Issue #5, February 2009

## CFL Safety

### What you need to know about broken bulbs



According to the US EPA, if every home in America replaced just one incandescent light bulb with an Energy Star qualified Compact Fluorescent (CFL) bulb we would save enough energy to light more than three million homes for a year, more than \$600 million in annual energy costs, and would prevent greenhouse gasses equivalent to the emissions of more than 800,000 cars.

While that should be enough information to convince even the most skeptic consumers to use CFLs in their homes, many people are still hesitant to make the switch because they fear mercury exposure if the bulbs break. Yes, CFLs contain mercury (a small amount) and accidents do happen – so it is important to know how to properly dispose of bulbs if they break to protect your family and the environment. Follow these simple guidelines from the US EPA for cleaning up a broken CFL:

- 1. Open a window and leave the room for at least 15 minutes.** If you have a fan, use it to blow air out of the room. No windows? Open the doors and nearby windows, use a fan to direct air to the windows.
- 2. Remove as much as you can without using a vacuum.** Wear disposable rubber gloves and carefully scoop up the fragments and powder with stiff paper or cardboard. Use a sticky tape to pick up any remaining pieces and powder and then wipe the area clean with a damp paper towel. Put all cleanup materials into two sealed bags and dispose of in an outdoor trash receptacle. Also put the broken bulb pieces into two sealed plastic bags.
- 3. Check with your town's recycling department** to see if they accept broken bulbs at a drop-off center, if not, put the bags with the broken CFL into an outdoor trash container and wash your hands.

## About MassRecycle

MassRecycle is a statewide coalition of individuals, governments, businesses, institutions and non-profit organizations dedicated to realizing and promoting the vital environmental, social and economic benefits provided through reducing, reusing, and recycling waste materials and increasing the utilization of recycled products. For more information, visit [www.MassRecycle.org](http://www.MassRecycle.org). Join us today and help our efforts!



## Where to Recycle...

### Used Compact Fluorescent Light Bulbs.

Wondering what to do with your compact fluorescent light bulbs that aren't broken but no longer work? **Home Depot** has just launched a CFL recycling program at all of their stores. Put any burnt out bulbs into a plastic bag and deposit it into one of the orange CFL recycling bins near the front of the store.



**Used Brita Filters.** **Brita** and **Preserve** have recently announced a recycling program for expired filters from Brita water pitchers that will begin in early 2009. Consumers will be able to mail in used filters or drop them off at select **Whole Foods** stores. Collected filters will be recycled into Preserve's line of 100% recyclable personal care, tableware, and kitchen products. To learn more visit [www.filterforgood.com](http://www.filterforgood.com).

## Ask Binnie!



Have a question? Ask Binnie, MassRecycle's Recycling Expert! Binnie is here to solve all of your recycling problems. To ask Binnie a question visit [www.massrecycle.org](http://www.massrecycle.org) and click on "ask the staff". He will email you an answer – and your question could even be featured in the next issue of *In the Loop!*

# Television Conversion Tips

On June 12, 2009 free analog TV broadcasting will be no more. This means that if you rely on an antenna to make your TV work you will need to make some adjustments in order to watch your favorite show. What are your options?

You can keep your existing TV working by either purchasing a TV converter box or by subscribing to a cable, satellite, or other pay service. Either option will allow you to use the same TV by converting the analog service to digital. Coupons are available through a government program to help cover the cost of the converters. Apply for a coupon at [www.dtv2009.gov](http://www.dtv2009.gov).

If you decide the best option is to purchase a TV with a digital tuner, please consider buying an energy efficient model. Check out [Energy Star's TV Webpage](#) for tips on buying new TVs.

When it is time to boot that old TV out of your house, it is vital that you do so responsibly. Televisions are full of toxins (including lead, mercury, chromium and arsenic) that can leach into soil and water endangering the health of humans, animals, and the environment. Follow these simple guidelines for proper disposal:

- **Don't put your TV into the trash** – CRTs (your bulky old TV) have been banned from disposal in MA landfills and waste combustors since 2000.
- **Check with your community's recycling program** to learn the best way to recycle your TV – some towns offer a decal program that allows residents to purchase a sticker to place on bulky goods to ensure pick-up. Some towns will allow residents to drop TVs off at the local recycling center.
- **Contact the company that manufactured your TV** – [Sony](#) and [LG](#) are two companies that have arranged for free take-back and recycling of its products.

With electronics being the fastest growing solid waste stream on earth it is important that we dispose of it properly. The United Nations Environmental Program estimates that 4000 tons of electronics get trashed each hour – that is 50 million tons per year! With only a 12% recycling rate in the US, we must all do our best to properly recycle our own electronics and to educate our friends, families, and co-workers on proper disposal methods.

## Stay in the Loop!

Make sure we email you the next issue!

- Sign up online at [www.MassRecycle.org](http://www.MassRecycle.org) using the "Request in the Loop" button or,
- Send a blank email to [info@massrecycle.org](mailto:info@massrecycle.org) with *In the Loop* as the subject line.

# Win a MassRecycle Tote!

Email your answers to this Inauguration Quiz to [megan@massrecycle.org](mailto:megan@massrecycle.org) for a chance to win a MassRecycle tote bag!

1. Who was the first president to use recycled-content paper to print the official inauguration programs?

- a) Bill Clinton
- b) Ronald Reagan
- c) Jimmy Carter

2. How many volunteers were expected to pick up recycling along the National Mall and the parade route this year?

- a) 1,000
- b) 3,000
- c) 6,000

3. What did the Presidential Inaugural Committee (PIC) plan to do with the manure from the horses participating in the Inauguration Day Parade?

- a) Use it as fertilizer on the White House Lawn
- b) Sell it to a nearby farm
- c) Distribute to interested citizens

# A Green Inauguration?

On January 20, 2009 close to 2 million people traveled to Washington DC to witness President Obama's Inauguration. Any event of that size is sure to come with a huge environmental impact – litter, carbon emissions from travel, thousands of printed programs... But did the Obama team make an effort to make the event eco-friendly?

According to Treehugger.com the inauguration had several green elements. To reduce the amount of trash left behind, attendees were encouraged to bring their own trash bags to clean up after themselves, and recycling containers were placed throughout the mall. To add to that, President Obama was sworn into office while standing on recycled-content carpet.

One of the inaugural balls was "green themed," complete with organic and local food/drinks, a venue close to public transportation, recycling and composting services, and carbon credits were purchased to off-set the negative impact of travel to the event.

We hope that these initial efforts by Obama are a sign that protecting the environment will be at the forefront of new policies and will become common practices in the new administration.

