

# Press Release No. 25/2009

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## Bye bye, light bulb! A farewell to an obsolescent model

### Low-energy light bulb: A quick fix for the climate's sake

The light bulb will begin to be phased out of the market starting Autumn 2009, as a result of a decision taken by the EU. Starting 1 September 2009 all frosted and other light bulbs of over 75 watts will no longer be for sale, to be followed gradually by lower-wattage light bulbs later on. There are good reasons for this as the conventional light bulb is not too 'bright': it only converts about five percent of the energy it absorbs into light. The remainder fizzles out as warmth. Modern compact fluorescent lamps, better known as energy saving lights, which convert about 25 percent of their energy into light, offer the better solution. Electricity costs are reduced by 49 to 177 euros when an old light bulb is replaced by a high-quality energy saving lamp. This is based on a calculation of 10,000 hours of operation, depending on frequency of use within three to ten years. "There should not be anyone still using the obsolescent light bulb. Modern energy saving lamps are the right thing for greater climate protection. It means one simple step that eases the household budget, too," said Dr. Thomas Holzmann, Vice President of the Federal Environment Agency (UBA). A free flyer issued by UBA provides tips about energy saving lamps (*Bye bye Glühbirne! Warum Energiesparlampen besser sind*).

An additional advantage of energy saving lamps is their significantly longer lifetime. Whereas the average lifetime of light bulbs is only 1,000 hours, energy saving lamps will last between 1,500 and 10,000 hours depending on quality. "As with all products one must also separate the wheat from the chaff when it comes to energy saving lamps. Brand-name products are often better than cheap no-name ones. Quality comes at a higher price but will last longer and ultimately prove cheaper", said UBA Vice President Holzmann. The more often a lamp is switched on and off, in a hall or staircase for example, the shorter its lifetime might be. However, there are many energy saving lamps that can cope with frequent 'on' and 'off' switching. Consumers are advised to ask their retailers about this.

The most important consumer information on buying lamps is as follows:

1. Pay attention to lumens not wattage: Lumens indicate the brightness of a lamp. A regular 60-watt light bulb, for example, has 710 lumens. These figures are usually featured on packaging.

2. Colouring: Energy saving lamps are available in a variety of light colours, and is indicated in Kelvin. Whether it is warm white light (about 2,700 Kelvin) for cosy indoor living or daytime brightness (about 6,000 Kelvin) for the workplace, there are energy saving lamps available to match every mood. Facts and figures can generally be found on packaging.
3. The right lamp for the right fixture: closed luminaries, on account of the greater light yield, are best fitted with energy saving lamps with visible uncoated tubes, which look something like folded mini 'neon tubes'. In open fixtures, there is a wide variety ranging from the classic pear or tear-shaped lamp to the candle-shaped for chandeliers. Again, local merchants can assist in making the right choice.
4. Used energy saving lamps do not belong in household waste or at the glass bank, due to the fact they contain small amounts of hazardous substances, e.g. mercury. As with spent batteries they must be disposed of separately. More information on disposal of waste is available on location or by going to [www.lightcycle.de](http://www.lightcycle.de). This website allows consumers to search for the nearest recycling or collection point. A good merchant will also redeem a used energy saving lamp—perhaps upon purchase of its replacement.

The *Bye Bye Glühbirne! Warum Energiesparlampen besser sind* flyer (in German) can be downloaded free of charge from [http://www.umweltbundesamt.de/uba-info-medien-e/mysql\\_medien.php?anfrage=Kennnummer&Suchwort=3754](http://www.umweltbundesamt.de/uba-info-medien-e/mysql_medien.php?anfrage=Kennnummer&Suchwort=3754).

A print version is available free of charge by addressing a request to the Federal Environment Agency c/o GVP, P.O. Box 300361, 53183 Bonn or placing a local call to (01888) 305 3355, or per e-mail at: [uba@broschuerenversand.de](mailto:uba@broschuerenversand.de).

Further information on the phase-out of light bulbs and on energy saving lamps is here: <http://www.umweltbundesamt.de/energie/licht.htm>.

Dessau-Roßlau, 13 May 2009