

# Florence Energy News



## COMPACT FLUORESCENT LIGHT BULBS

Compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs) are a good choice for home lighting because they use less energy than incandescent bulbs, produce the same light output, and last up to 10 times longer. Each bulb can save \$40 or more in electricity costs over its lifetime.

## WHERE TO USE CFLS

The federal government's Energy Star guidelines suggest using CFLs in open fixtures that allow airflow, such as table and floor lamps, hanging lamps, wall sconces, and outdoor fixtures. CFLs provide the greatest savings when they are used in fixtures that are turned on for more than 15 minutes at a time. They provide the least benefit if they are used in closets, for example.

## LIGHT QUALITY

People are often concerned about the light quality available from CFLs. There are several ways to control this:

- Check the lumen rating of the bulb; the higher the lumen rating, the greater the light output.
- Also check the bulb's kelvin (K) rating. Bulbs with a lower K rating (2,700 - 3,000K) give off a soft, warm light similar to an incandescent and are suitable for living rooms, bedrooms, etc.
- Bulbs with a higher K rating (3,500 - 6,500K) give off a cooler, white or bluish-white light that may be identified as "bright white" or "daylight." You may want to choose this type of bulb for task lighting.
- Remember the CFLs can take from 30 seconds to three minutes to reach their full lighting potential after you turn the lamp on.

## MERCURY

Mercury is an essential component of CFLs that allow them to operate efficiently. Here are some key facts about mercury:

- CFLs contain a very small amount of mercury, about five milligrams, sealed within the glass tubing. No mercury is released when the bulb is intact or in use.
- The power produced by burning coal to light an incandescent bulb releases more mercury into the environment than the power produced to light a CFL.
- Therefore, CFLs are more environmentally friendly even if they are discarded improperly.
- To gain the greatest environmental advantage from CFLs, they should be recycled.

## RECYCLING AND DISPOSAL

Although compact fluorescents are fast becoming the most popular form of efficient residential lighting, they are also starting to be seen in our landfills.

Because of their mercury content, it is best to handle CFLs the same way you would other household hazardous waste products like paint or batteries. They should never be incinerated.

While most states and communities do not require recycling of compact fluorescents, check with your community recycling center or local government about your recycling options. For information on disposal laws and recycling programs in your area, see [www.epa.gov/bulbrecycling](http://www.epa.gov/bulbrecycling).



If you break a CFL, the Environmental Protection Agency recommends you take the following steps:

- Open a window to disperse any vapor that may escape and leave the room for 15 minutes or more.

- Carefully scoop up the fragments and powder with stiff paper or cardboard and place them in a sealable plastic bag. **Do not use your bare hands.**
- Wipe the area clean with damp paper towels or disposable wet wipes and place them in the plastic bag.
- Place the plastic bag in a second sealed plastic bag and dispose of in the trash. Some states require that broken and unbroken CFLs be taken to a recycling center.
- Do not use a vacuum cleaner or broom to clean up the broken bulb on hard surfaces.

## RECORD FUEL PRICES FORCE INCREASE TO FLORENCE UTILITIES ELECTRIC RATES



The price of the electricity that Florence Utilities buys from TVA is increasing because of rapid increases in fuel prices around the world. Skyrocketing prices for fuels TVA uses to make electricity will cause wholesale electricity prices to increase about 20 percent effective October 1, 2008.

The bulk of the increase is the direct result of rising fuel prices, which are recovered quarterly through TVA's Fuel Cost Adjustment (FCA) mechanism. The FCA is based on the direct cost of fuel used in TVA's generating plants and the cost of purchased power that TVA uses to supplement its power generation. About 56% of TVA's power supply comes from fossil fuels used to make electricity. A variety of factors affect fuel and purchased power costs, including the weather and changes in market prices for various fuels. Many utilities use similar mechanisms to adjust their rates and are faced with similar rate increases.

In addition, continuing drought conditions mean that TVA has been able to generate only about half as much inexpensive hydropower this year as it would generate in an average year. When

*(continued on back)*

## RECORD FUEL PRICES (continued)

TVA cannot generate that hydropower, it must buy replacement power at market prices.

The remainder of the TVA rate increase will cover additional fuel-related costs such as increased coal inventory costs and the expansion of TVA's energy efficiency and demand reduction program.

As a distributor of TVA power, when higher prices force TVA to increase its rates, Florence Utilities must pass those costs along to our customers.



## NATURAL GAS PRICES

**BE PREPARED!**

**DON'T BE CAUGHT IN THE COLD**

GLOBAL DEMAND FOR ENERGY...AN INCREASING DEMAND FOR NATURAL GAS FOR ELECTRIC POWER GENERATION...THE VALUE OF THE DOLLAR...AN ACTIVE HURRICANE SEASON. ALL OF THESE FACTORS AFFECT NATURAL GAS PRICES.

Earlier this summer, natural gas prices were soaring. However, like crude oil and gasoline, the market has somewhat softened and natural gas prices have decreased significantly, but they are still higher than last year. We are optimistic that prices will continue to decrease further, but we are still asking our customers to be prepared, and we will do our part by keeping you posted through the City of Florence Website ([www.florenceal.org](http://www.florenceal.org)) and the Florence Energy that comes with your utility bill each month. The Florence Gas Department will continue to utilize means to keep our rates as low as

possible: by continuing the use of our Risk Management Purchasing Plan, by purchasing gas through a natural gas cooperative, and by maintaining our expenses as low as possible. This strategy provided you, our customer, with some of the lowest rates in North Alabama this past winter.

## WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Call the Budget Billing Administrator at 718-3210 and inquire about our Budget Billing program.
- Clean and/or replace your furnace filter regularly.
- If you have a fireplace, keep the damper doors closed when not in use.
- Consider replacement windows - double pane and/or storm windows reduce your energy usage by 25% to 50%.
- Use a programmable thermostat. Each degree your thermostat is reduced during the winter can potentially save you 3% on your heating bill.
- Consider insulating your attic. This could reduce your heat and cooling usage by 30%.
- Change the rotation of your ceiling fan to clockwise. This will push warm air at the ceiling down into the living area.
- Perform annual maintenance on heating equipment for proper operation.
- Replace older equipment with more efficient natural gas equipment.

Hopefully, this information will help you prepare for the rising energy costs we are facing to heat our homes and businesses. If you have any questions, please call our office at 760-6490.

# Florence ENERGY

NEWS YOU CAN USE FROM FLORENCE UTILITIES

Earlier this summer, natural gas prices were soaring. However, like crude oil and gasoline, the market has somewhat softened and natural gas prices have decreased significantly, but they are still higher than last year. We are optimistic that prices will continue to decrease further, but we are still asking our customers to be prepared.

In addition, the price of the electricity that Florence Utilities buys from TVA is increasing because of rapid increases in fuel prices around the world. Skyrocketing prices for fuels TVA uses to make electricity will cause wholesale electricity prices to increase about 20 percent effective October 1, 2008. As a distributor of TVA power, when higher prices force TVA to increase its rates, Florence Utilities must pass those costs along to our customers. Information about this electrical rate increase is included in this issue.

Hopefully, this information will help you prepare for the rising energy costs, and we will do our part by keeping you posted through the City of Florence website and this publication that comes with your utility bill each month.

[www.florenceutilities.com](http://www.florenceutilities.com)