

Common myths about compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs)

CFLs are a great way to save energy and money. We've outlined some common myths associated with CFLs to help customers better understand the benefits. If you have questions, please to call our customer support hotline at **1-800-942-0266**.

Myth	Truth
All CFLs are ENERGY STAR® qualified.	Not all bulbs are ENERGY STAR qualified. For the highest quality, always look for the ENERGY STAR label.
CFLs are harmful to the environment due to their mercury content.	The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency concludes that a typical CFL over the course of its life will put less mercury into the environment than using incandescent light to produce equivalent lighting.
You should leave CFLs on because they take more energy to start up each time they're turned on.	It is better to turn CFLs off when you leave a room – even if you know you'll be back shortly.
Turning a CFL on and off shortens the bulb's life.	Each CFL has a published rated life span in hours. If you use the CFL for less than three hours each time, it will shorten the life of the bulb. In comparison when you leave it on for more than three hours at a time, it will increase the life of the bulb—but it will cost you more in energy to leave it on continuously.
CFLs flicker.	Modern day CFLs don't flicker.
CFLs produce unnatural "alien" light.	CFLs are available in a wide range of light colors – from yellowish to bluish-white – depending on your preference. Please reference the color temperature chart on the back to find the light that is right for you.
CFLs aren't as bright as regular light bulbs.	You need to make sure you match up equivalent lumens ratings. A lumen rating is used to measure the perceived power of a light. For example, you'll need a 23W CFL to replace the light from a 100W incandescent bulb. A lumen rating guide is located at the end of this document.
CFLs hum.	Modern day CFLs do not hum.



Let's turn the answers on.

CFLs are expensive.	Many CFLs are readily available for under \$2. Special pricing from our Home Energy Savings program can help reduce the price even more.
There aren't many CFLs to choose from.	There are CFLs in almost every style, shape and size of bulb from floodlights to globes to chandelier bulbs. They also come in a variety of finishes and color temperatures.
CFLs have a delayed start.	Modern CFLs turn on right away. Some will not start at full brightness & usually turn on at 60 percent and within seconds are at full brightness.
CFLs are a fire hazard.	Toward the end of their life, it is normal for some CFL bulbs to smoke a little and even show signs of melted plastic on the ballast. The bulb's safety feature, called a Voltage Dependent Resistor (VDR), kicks in when the ballast heats up. VDR is an electronic component that cuts the circuit (like a circuit breaker) in the lamp when the ballast heats up. The Underwriter's Laboratory (UL) certifies CFL bulbs (including their VDRs) that are constructed with plastics that do not pose a fire hazard when overheated.
CFLs do not work in 3-way or dimming circuits.	Bulbs on dimming circuits or 3-way bulbs require CFLs specifically designed for those purposes. Using standard CFLs in 3-way or dimmable circuits will damage the components and will shorten the life of the bulb. Only use clearly marked bulbs for dimming and 3-way applications.

Color temperature chart (Measured in kelvins.)



Lumen rating guide

Incandescent bulbs	Minimum light output	Common ENERGY STAR® CFLs
(watts)	(lumens)	(watts)
40	450	9-13
60	800	13-15
75	1,100	18-25
100	1,600	23-30



Let's turn the answers on.