

Should I Go Green and Use Compact Fluorescent Light Bulbs?

By Rick Trossman, Owner of Windy City Lighting located in Arlington Heights, IL

I have heard this question many times over the past year, and feel the best way to discuss this topic is by listing the advantages and disadvantages of compact fluorescent floodlights (CFL's) versus halogen lamps.

Hopefully, after this comparison, you will be able to make an informed decision on the subject. And remember, what is deemed right for one store may not be right for all stores.

Advantages of CFLs:

- Energy Savings: Switching to CFLs may save up to 75 percent in energy costs.
- Longer Life: CFLs typically last up to three times longer than halogen lamps.
- Lower Heat: CFLs are popular in heat sensitive environments.

Disadvantages of CFLs

- Quality of Light: CFLs are inferior to halogen lamps in its ability to see colors, fabrics and textures. People and objects look better under halogen light.
- Beam Control: CFLs have no beam control. Light filter everywhere. Display lighting requires narrow focus beams for spot lighting.
- Contain Mercury: While CFL vendors and environmentalists tout the energy cost savings of CFLs, they often omit the personal and societal costs of proper CFL disposal.
- Usually can't be used with Dimmers

In summary, you must determine whether the disadvantages of the CFLs offset the advantages. But let me say this; if I owned a retail store or showroom I would consider using CFLs in recessed cans and would not use them in a track lighting system. The whole purpose of track lighting is it allows you to put light where you want it and this is not possible with CFLs. However, feel free to contact me to discuss the particular situation at your store or showroom.



Energy Wiser Compact Fluorescent Par-30