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Fluorescent lamps to be phased out in 2023

The intentional use of mercury in the EU has steadily decreased over the past 15 years thanks to the adoption and implementation of a comprehensive set of EU rules limiting its use in products. In addition to these intended uses, there are unintentional emissions of mercury to air from several activities that use mercury-containing fuels or raw materials.

So, what exactly is the RoHS Directive?

RoHS stands for “Restriction of the use of Hazardous Substances”. In this instance, it refers to the use of mercury in lamps. Mercury is considered a hazardous substance which is why it’s use in electrical equipment is banned. Up until recently, they were exemptions for t5 and t8 fluorescent lamps, compact fluorescent lamps, and special purpose lamps. Since then, these exemptions (defined in Annex III) have been amended. Due to this, the production of many fluorescent lamps will be banned. The only exceptions are HPD and special purpose lamps, as they may be produced for another 3-5 years.

In addition, the ban refers to production of corresponding lamps. The use and the sale or purchase of stock products are still allowed. The RoHS directives only provide for a so-called “phasing out” of non-sustainable light sources.

It was already decided that the placing on the market of the T8 fluorescent lamp will be banned from September 2023. The amendments to the RoHS directives from last spring put the end of the fluorescent tube a few days earlier: from August 25, 2023, T8 lamps will be phased out together with T5 fluorescent lamps.
It will also hit compact fluorescent lamps with plug-in bases as early as February 25. An extension of the exemptions to 3-5 years is planned for HPD lamps and special purpose lamps (such as for UV-C disinfection with lamps).

Fluorescent Lamps or LED Light Bulbs – A comparison

T8 and T5 fluorescent tubes may be cheaper initially, but LED tubes are more cost-effective in the long term. The benefits of an LED light bulb vs. fluorescent bulbs include:

- More Energy Efficient: If you replaced all the bulbs in your office with LEDs, you could conservatively use 60% less power to light up your facility. That's because the energy-saving technologies used to produce LEDs have far outpaced that of fluorescent linear tubes.
- Longer Life Expectancy: LED bulbs last two to four times longer than fluorescent lighting.
- More Cost-Effective: While you will spend more money upfront on LED bulbs, you'll ultimately make it up in energy savings and lower long-term maintenance costs.
- Better for the Environment: Unlike linear fluorescent tubes, LED lights don't contain any mercury. Fluorescent lights must be handled carefully because mercury is harmful to the skin and can contaminate the environment.
- Instant On: With LED bulbs, you don't have to wait for the flickering to stop. Also, you can turn them on and off all you want – frequent clicks of the switch do not shorten an LED bulb lifespan.

Key Dates of the official end-of-market deadlines:

– **February 24, 2023**: end of long-life fluorescent tubes and compact fluorescent lamps with non-integrated gear (CFL-ni) with less than 20,000 hours.

– **August 24, 2023**: end of T5 and T8 fluorescent tubes, compact fluorescent lamps (with a lifespan of more than 20,000 hours).

– **August 31, 2023**: end of halogen capsules with G9 G4 GY 6.35 base.

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