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Product Safety Alert
For Immediate Release

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THE ELECTRICAL SAFETY AUTHORITY RESPONDS TO CONSUMER CONCERNS ABOUT COMPACT FLUORESCENT LAMPS

Toronto, ON – The Electrical Safety Authority (ESA) is receiving increasing reports from concerned consumers regarding the end-of-life failure of Compact Fluorescent Lamps (CFLs). The end-of-life failure for CFLs may vary depending on the manufacturer of the CFL, and on the type and location of the lighting fixture being used. When CFLs fail they may emit smoke, an odour, or a popping sound; and the plastic base may become discoloured, charred or deformed. Certification agencies have advised that this failure does not present a shock or fire hazard for approved products.

This picture is representative of CFL failures reported to ESA.



ESA is concerned that it can be difficult for consumers to distinguish between what is normal and what may be a precursor to fire or some other hazardous condition. As a safety precaution, ESA encourages consumers to replace CFLs at the first sign of failure or aging. The early warning signs to look for include: flickering, a bright orange or red glow, popping sounds, an odour, or browning of the ballast enclosure (base).

ESA is also advising consumers that different CFLs are required for different applications and use. CFLs may lack information on the packaging, or provide conflicting information about safe product use. Consumers are encouraged to read the base of the lamp and to contact manufacturers for additional information if required. Unless otherwise specified, CFLs should not be used: in totally enclosed recessed fixtures; with dimmer switches; in touch lamps, with photocells or with electronic timers; where exposed to weather; or where exposed to water.

ESA is encouraging product manufacturers to review packaging information to support consumers in making safe product decisions. Activities are underway to update the existing Canadian safety standard for CFLs to address consumers' end-of-life product issues.

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