

Incandescent Bulbs Are Done

On Jan. 1, 2014, it was lights out for standard incandescent 60- and 40-watt light bulbs. In order to comply with efficiency standards outlined in the [Energy Independence and Security Act](#), which was signed into law by President George Bush in 2007, it is now illegal to import or manufacture them. But retailers will still be able to sell off any remaining stock. In 2012, all 100-watt bulbs were phased out, and 75-watt bulbs disappeared the following year.

The old incandescent bulbs are highly inefficient - only about 10 percent of their energy output is converted into light; the rest is lost to heat. "Once all of our nation's 4 billion screw-based sockets have an efficient bulb in them, U.S. consumers will save \$13 billion and 30 large coal-burning power plants-worth of electricity a year. If you replace an incandescent bulb with a CFL (compact fluorescent light), you'll save about \$50 over the course of the bulb's lifetime. LEDs (light-emitting diodes) are pricey up front - they run about \$10 per 60-watt equivalent, but over time they offer a savings of \$100 to \$150 in energy costs. The numbers are compelling, but that doesn't mean that some of us won't mourn the loss of the mellow light emitted by old-fashioned bulbs, especially the 60-watt version, which accounts for about 50 percent of household lighting in the United States.

Here are expert tips to comply with the new law, as well as to balance energy efficiency and cost savings with aesthetics:

- Don't inadvertently buy a bulb that's too bright. New bulbs are measured in lumens, not watts, which can be confusing. A 10-watt LED is as bright as a 60-watt incandescent, so if you purchase a 19-watt LED for a small accent light, it will seem glaring.
- Choose different types of bulbs for different purposes. Use LEDs and CFLs to light hallways, stairwells, and basements, and for spotlighting objects.
- If you want to use CFLs, choose the right color. Most people prefer the ones labeled "warm." The bulbs labeled "cool" have a whitish tone and the ones labeled "daylight" are bluish.
- Bring the bulb you want to replace to the store so you can find an equivalent that is the correct size and shape.
- The new bulbs are now being made for recessed can lighting, but you can still buy reflector bulbs, which are not subject to the same regulations.
- If you buy a dimmer, choose one that is compatible with an incandescent, CFL or LED bulb.
- Look for the words ENERGY STAR. CFL and LED bulb quality can vary significantly. Be sure to only buy those that have the ENERGY STAR label, which ensures that the product meets the Environmental Protection Agency's strict standards for energy, efficiency, and performance. These bulbs are certified and tested by a third party and will save consumers an average of \$6 in electricity costs per year, per bulb.