





Fluorescent tube phase out

The era of the fluorescent strip tube is ending. The Restriction of Hazardous Substances in Electrical and Electronic Equipment (RoHS) with regard to fluorescent tubes has come into effect. This means:

- Manufacturers and suppliers will not be able to bring fluorescent tubes to market (see the picture below which explains more about types)
- The move to LED lighting will be furthered.

As can be seen in the diagram below the phasing out of fluorescent lighting has already started. Note that the words 'not bring to market' means that they will no longer be manufactured but will still be available whilst stocks last.

Lamp type	Fluorescent ring	Fluorescent compact	Fluorescent tube	Halogen pin*
				
No further bringing to market from:	February 2023	February 2023	August 2023	September 2023

* Halogen pin lamps are not fluorescent but are included as these are also being phased out

If you have:

- Fluorescent ring lamps: LED replacements are available but it's nearly as easy to replace the whole unit as the old fitting may need modifying.
- Compact fluorescent: LED replacements are available. It may be worthwhile switching to a 'standard' fitting for future convenience and choice of bulbs.
- Fluorescent tubes: LED replacements are available for majority of existing T5 and T8 fittings (but often not the long discontinued T12's) but fittings may need rewiring. LED tubes that work with the existing 'ballast' are increasingly available but may not work as efficiently. Any rewiring is relatively simple and does mean a replacement fitting is not needed but does need an electrician; in which case replacing the fitting is worth consideration and will differ little in cost. For an explanation of 'T' fitting size see overleaf. Consult 50plus if you are unsure.
- Halogen capsule lights: LED replacements are available but the note overleaf about halogen down-lights also applies.

Remember that LEDs come in differing 'colour temperatures', measured in degrees Kelvin. The lower the temperature the more candle-like the colour is, the higher temperatures are the brighter whites.

Tubes: If you are not sure about the tube diameter you have (it's often printed on the tube but can rub off) the meaning of the 'T' measurement is T5 = 5/8 inches, T8 = 8/8 inches and T12 = 12/8 inches; all being the tube diameter.

Halogen down-light bulbs were withdrawn previously. If you have low voltage halogen down-lights, replacing with mains powered ones is usually the best way forward as it removes the 'transformers' (actually power supplies) which act as another potential point of failure and which are usually up in the ceiling somewhere.

What are these changes being made? To quote the European Commission:

"The RoHS Directive aims to prevent the risks posed to human health and the environment related to the management of electronic and electrical waste. It does this by restricting the use of certain hazardous substances in EEE (electrical and electronic equipment) that can be substituted by safer alternatives. These restricted substances include heavy metals, flame retardants or plasticizers. The Directive promotes the recyclability of EEE, as EEE and its components that have become waste contain fewer hazardous substances. At the same time, it ensures a level playing field for manufacturers and importers of EEE in the European market.'

In this instance the issue is mercury, which is found in discharge lamps, which is what fluorescent tubes are.

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