

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1088/09  
by Ashley Mote (NI)  
to the Commission

Subject: The compact fluorescent light (CFL) mercury problem

Is it not the case that the introduction of CFL bulbs into everyone's home also introduces one of the most dangerous chemicals on Earth? They contain mercury, which the EU has otherwise banned as highly toxic. Does the Commission not understand that they unnecessarily bring into every home in the land serious health risks and disposal problems?

Does the Commission approve of the almost cretinous official guidance on what to do if a CFL bulb breaks, viz. leave the room immediately and not return for at least 20 minutes, wear thick gloves to clear up, dispose of the gloves carefully afterwards and do not vacuum up the pieces?

How, exactly, is anyone to remove pieces of glass from a deep-pile carpet without using a vacuum cleaner?

Since the EU's banning of the use of mercury in many industrial processes has had serious commercial consequences, and forced the closure of some specialist businesses altogether, surely it makes no sense if mercury is now to be used in every light bulb in every home, office and public building in the UK?