



# Home Tips



• CHRISTIAN BUILDING INSPECTORS, INC., 3697 HABERSHAM LANE, DULUTH, GEORGIA 30096, 770-849-0920 • AUGUST 2012 •

## Q & A

### Choosing Light Bulbs in 2012

The Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 takes effect in January, which means that shopping for light bulbs will never be quite the same again. The act requires light bulbs to deliver light levels similar to those of traditional incandescent bulbs but to use 25 percent less energy. Between now and 2014, conventional incandescent bulbs will be phased out, starting with the 100-watt bulb in 2012.

The good news is that there are excellent energy-efficient bulbs already on the shelves, with many more to come in 2012. The bad news is that shopping for new bulbs includes a learning curve because none are exact replicas of the incandescent bulbs we're used to. To make smart choices and avoid frustration, you'll need to know a bit more about light bulbs.



#### Halogen Incandescent

Similar to standard incandescents, except that they burn hotter and produce a whiter light.

**Pros:** The most similar in looks, light quality and light distribution to a traditional incandescent bulb, yet it's 30 percent more efficient and lasts several times longer. It starts up instantly, it's dimmable, its life span isn't affected by frequent on and off activity, and it doesn't contain mercury.

**Cons:** At about \$1.50, it costs four times as much as a conventional incandescent bulb and uses a lot more energy

than CFLs and LEDs (both are at least 75 percent more efficient than traditional incandescent bulbs). It also burns much hotter and doesn't give off the exact same glow we're accustomed to. It produces a brighter, whiter light with an intense glare, so it needs to be shaded, shielded or directed so the filament isn't in your line of sight.

**Best uses:** Reading lamps, exterior floodlights, track lighting, under-cabinet lighting and accent lighting.

**Handling halogens:** Don't handle a halogen bulb with your fingers; use a clean rag. The oils from your skin will cause the bulb to burn hotter and shorten its life.



#### Compact Fluorescent (CFL)

CFLs are highly efficient and last a long time.

**Pros:** Compact fluorescents are now better than earlier incarnations at delivering a warmer light without long warm-up times, flickering or buzzing. There are also more CFLs designed for different household fixtures, including recessed cans, outdoor lights and track lights. Most CFLs now contain 60 percent less mercury than five years ago, and prices for CFLs have plummeted. A quality CFL now costs less than \$2 a bulb and can save \$30 per bulb in electricity costs over its lifetime, compared with a conventional incandescent.

**Cons:** Some CFLs still warm up slowly and cast a bluer light than conventional bulbs, and most don't work well with three-way switches or dimmers (even CFLs designed to be dimmed may not work with all dimmer switches). They also contain some mercury. CFL longevity claims are still unreliable; bulb life can be diminished by vibration, cold, overheating in recessed fixtures and being operated in short spurts.

**Best uses:** Interior fixtures that are left on for extended periods, with a minimal amount of cycling them off and on. Also good for lighting large areas.



**Light Emitting Diodes (LEDs)**

LEDs are extremely long-lasting and efficient, but bulb options are still limited.

**Pros:** LEDs are at least as efficient as CFLs, mercury free and excellent for cold weather use. There's no startup delay, and they work with dimmers. They also have a very long life: 25,000 hours vs. 6,600 for an equivalent CFL. And overall, their light quality is more pleasant than that of many CFLs.

**Cons:** There are almost no 60-, 75- or 100-watt equivalents on the market; most only shine light in one direction; and they cost \$20 to \$50. The few on the market that shine light in all directions run in the \$50-plus range. Also, LED bulbs that are brighter than 40 watts are still generally dim and don't fit most existing fixtures. But the future will be brighter. Prices will

come down radically over the next few years, quality choices will expand and most industry watchers believe LEDs are the future of lighting...eventually.

**Best uses:** High-use fixtures such as recessed cans and porch lights, and hard-to-reach fixtures (closets, high ceilings and crawl spaces), where changing a light bulb is inconvenient.

**Read the Label to Compare Bulbs**

Light bulbs now carry package labels to help you choose the most efficient bulbs. For the best quality, buy Energy Star-rated bulbs from a reliable supplier. If you're buying high-priced LEDs, look for bulbs with at least a three-year warranty and hang on to your receipt.

Source: The Family Handyman January 2012

***Quote Of The Month***

"Gratitude is a sometime thing in the world. Just because you've been feeding them all winter, don't expect the birds to take it easy on your new grass seed."

Bill Vaughan

**A Tip Of The Hat To:**

***Linda Hagan***

***Prudential Georgia Realty  
1409 Peachtree Road  
Atlanta, Georgia 30319  
404-229-8788***



**Thank You**

**CHRISTIAN BUILDING INSPECTORS, INC.**

• Member: ASHI, GAHI, ICC •

• International Code Council Residential Combination Inspector No. 5185008-R5 •

• Fully Insured With Errors & Omissions and Liability Insurance •

• Office: 1-888-257-0365 or 770-849-0920, Fax 770-849-0540, Cell 404-697-4129 •

• Web Page: <http://www.christianbuildinginspectors.com> , Email: [rodharrison@christianbuildinginspectors.com](mailto:rodharrison@christianbuildinginspectors.com) •



- Site
- Drainage
- Foundations
- Floor Slabs
- Crawl Spaces
- Basements
- Structural
- Interior
- Exterior
- Appliances
- Ventilation
- Electrical
- Plumbing
- Heating
- Air Conditioning
- Attic
- Roofing
- Radon
- Mold
- Warranty
- New Homes