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PRESS RELEASE

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Statement on Safety Issues surrounding the use of Compact Fluorescent Lamps.

The Energy Safety Service confirmed today that the fire risk from using compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs) is extremely low. There are around 13 million bulbs in use in New Zealand and only one instance of a CFL-related flame reported.

Energy Safety's General Manager confirmed they have received seven calls from members of the public, but they had heard only one report of a CFL causing a flame through the Fire Service.

"These light bulbs are subject to strict fire retardant safety standards, and pose no more of a risk than any other light bulbs we use in our homes."

The New Zealand Fire Service's Manager for Fire Investigation, Peter Wilding, says they have made improvements to their data reporting but have seen no real cause for concern. "We've added CFLs to our incident reporting system to better collate and identify any issues there may be with these bulbs. But to date, there have been no confirmed structure fires involving these bulbs."

NZ Lighting Council advises that the base of a CFL as well as the electronic circuit board contains flame extinguishing plastic so if it does char for any reason, it may produce smoke but should not burn. Quality brands will also have internal fusing to prevent the lamp generating sufficient heat to create a hazard.

CFLs from reputable brands are subject to extensive testing to ensure they are safe for use. They have been in use in millions of homes around the world for over 25 years and are the most energy efficient options for New Zealand homes.

Internal blackening of the glass components of the bulb has been raised as a concern, but Lighting Council advise that discolouration inside any type of fluorescent lamp is normal at the end of its life, and should not be a cause for concern.

It is clear that many of the concerns around CFLs have stemmed from the misconception that people will be forced to use them as inefficient lighting is phased out from November next year. CFLs are certainly the most efficient lighting option on the market at moment, but they're not the only one – at the end of the day it's up to the individual what they choose to use.

CFLs are being used around the world in increasing numbers and are a simple and effective way to reduce energy use, save money and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The Lighting Council suggests you use product bought from reputable brands which invest heavily in research and development to ensure their products are safe and the best choice for the environment.

If people have electrical safety concerns around CFLs they can contact Energy Safety on 0508 377 463.

For any further inquiries, please contact NZ Lighting Council CEO, Richard Ponting or refer to the CFL Information Brochure on the Media page of our Website.

http://www.lightingcouncil.org.nz/pdf_files/cfl_information_sheet_1.pdf

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