

The Myth Relating to Banning Incandescent Light bulbs – 10 Wasted Years.

Following a number of high publicity statements about the banning of incandescent light bulbs the public has been led to believe that the Government is taking a stand and making real progress. In September, Secretary of State for the Environment, Hilary Benn, said “The most energy-guzzling light bulbs in Britain will start disappearing from shop shelves early next year as part of efforts to cut CO2 emissions”.

The statement is true, but the reality is far from the sentiment. In actual fact there will be a voluntary agreement with the major retailers to phase out tungsten lamps over a long period. The agreed timetable takes us to December 2011 with further EU proposals in place to take us to 2017. (For details see below for what has been agreed and future proposals.)

The regulators, the retailers and the lighting industry have an outline proposal to improve lamp efficiencies to 14lm/w over 10 years. Many compact fluorescent lamps on the market today already substantially out perform these figures. Indeed, to comply with the current Building Regulations, lamps must have a minimum efficiency of 40lm/w. That is about 3 times more efficient than the proposal for a 40w lamp in 2017. Surely we have to do more. This proposal amounts to doing almost nothing and is, in effect, an agreement to waste the next ten years.

This is also only voluntary for the first phase to 2011 and a proposal up to 2017. There will still be millions of incandescent lamps on the market and in people's homes and businesses for many years beyond 2017. If all these new lamps have regular caps many people will continue using incandescent lamps. If we are to make any real progress in the next 10 years government must do much more. We must further promote energy saving above all else because no matter how our power is generated we need to cut our demand, in order to make the necessary progress to reduce our carbon emissions.

The current building regulation requirement for 30% dedicated low energy lighting must be increased and more new light fittings should be fitted with dedicated low energy lamps. This way, new lighting will make major energy saving and will completely avoid switchback to the incandescent lamps of the past.

There are now new products on the market that address these issues and the public needs to be aware of what is on offer. One such company is tp24 Ltd, a specialist low energy lighting company, who have a huge range of over 250 dedicated products using lamps with efficiencies of 45lm/m and more. Prices are comparable with standard fittings and these products offer energy saving up to 80% with lamp life up to 8 times longer than conventional incandescent light bulbs.

So what has been agreed?

From January 2008

The major retailers will voluntarily cease replacing stock of all inefficient (General Lighting Service, GLS) A-shaped incandescent lamps of energy rating higher than 100W (predominantly 150W lamps).

Does anyone have 150w GLS lamps? Maybe your granny has an odd one but they are few and far between. This ruling does not include any halogen lamps - not the 500w or 300w or 200w linear halogen lamps in those outdoor floodlights which are so popular.

From January 2009

The major retailers will voluntarily cease selling all inefficient GLS A-shaped lamps of energy rating higher than 60W (predominantly 150W lamps, 100W lamps, plus some 75W lamps)

This still does not include any halogen lamps, candle bulbs or golf ball lamps.

From January 2010

The major retailers will voluntarily cease selling all GLS A-shaped lamps of efficacy of energy rating higher than 40W (predominantly 60W lamps).

Guess what - This still does not include any halogen lamps, candle bulbs or golf ball lamps.

By December 2011

The major retailers will voluntarily cease selling all remaining inefficient GLS A-shaped lamps and 60W "candle" and "golfball" lamps. (predominantly 40W and 25W A-shaped GLS bulbs, and 60W candles and golfballs).

So, finally, golf ball and candle lamps are included, but still no mention of halogen, including those high wattage linear lamps.

Defra goes on to say – “At the moment, we expect candles and golfballs, tungsten halogen lamps and lamps supplied with non-lighting electrical appliances to remain on sale, because suitable energy-efficient alternatives do not currently exist.”

The following retailers support this initiative: ASDA, B&Q, The Co-operative Group, Home Retail Group (Argos and Homebase), IKEA, John Lewis, Marks & Spencer, Morrisons, Sainsbury's, Somerfield, Tesco, Waitrose, Wickes, Woolworths, British Retail Consortium, Association of Convenience Stores and the British Hardware Federation. It is also being promoted through the major energy companies as part of their activities through the Carbon Emissions Reduction Target (CERT).

After 2011

There is an EU proposal relating to changing to lamp efficiency. Lamps will be rated by lumen output per watt.

From 2013

It is proposed that 100w lamps must have an efficiency of no less than 17 lm/w, 75w lamps 16 lm/w and 60w lamps 13 lm/w

From 2015

The proposal requires 60w lamp efficiencies will increase to 15 lm/w and include 40w lamps at 11 lm/w and 25w lamps at 10 lm/w.

Finally from 2017

It is proposed that 40w lamps efficiencies will increase to 14 lm/w and 25w lamps to 12 lm/w.