

# ELECTRONOTES

WEBNOTE 16

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ENWN-16

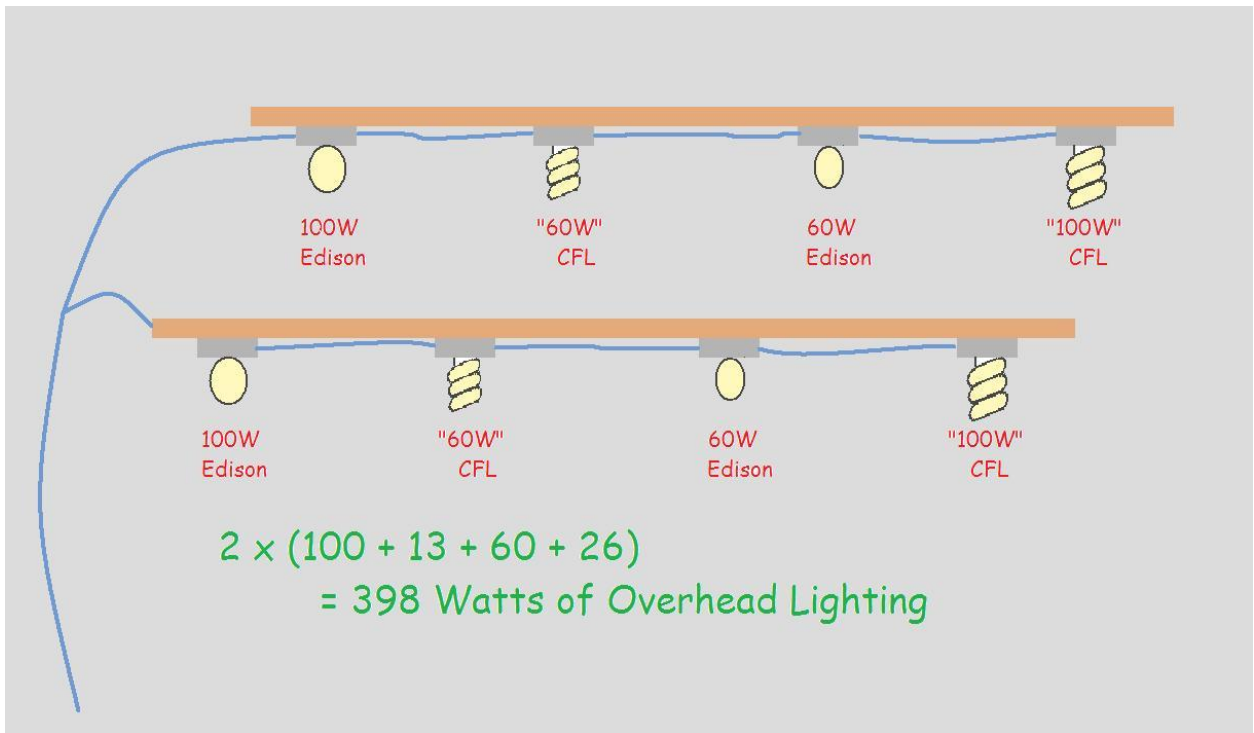
## THOSE CFL BULBS – STILL A JOKE?

In two previous Webnotes I have perhaps let it be known that I am disenchanted with those Compact Fluorescent Lamps (CFLs). I have found they don't last anywhere near as long as it says on the box, that they can fail with accompanying alarming acoustical event, and I think they kill light switches. Their short life tends to negate their hyped energy savings, although they are probably still economical. I suppose everyone has a different experience with them. But if one visits the Internet and Googles, you find mostly negative reports. Of course, positive reports are not worthy news, and of course not worth an actual rant.

I am writing this because I just had another one go bad. That's 14 so far. I had thought I had only 24 of them, but it appears I bought 36. It was the third 100W equivalent in that socket. This one flickered about 10 minutes then went out quietly. Yes it is installed wrong I guess. It is "base up" but in an open socket more than a foot below any ceiling. The box doesn't warn you about installation at all. I don't get it.

I will be very happy when they are all gone. I did replace this one with a 100W incandescent. Beautiful, CLEAN light – not the sickly yellow. I had thought the CFL was whiter, but as I compare, the incandescent is much more agreeable.

I have devised a scheme to live with these CFLs: make a mix of CFLs and incandescents. This was not really by plan. Much of the lighting in my work area was from five of those dual 8 foot fluorescent "commercial" type fixtures which I had on hand. They are themselves nasty in being heavy, the tubes are expensive and hard to get, and the ballasts are prone to burning out. So these I am replacing as time goes on. Yet the 8-foot geometry was right. So I replace them with an 8 foot 2x4 with four regular socket fixtures (see figure for two such rows). Each socket has its own switch in addition to the main switch for the whole bank. But I end up always using all eight.



Ever since I was young I have had the habit of dealing with minor annoyances promptly. A short stalk of overripe broccoli better suited to the woodstove than the dinner plate would none the less be given the prompt attention of my digestive system so that I could avoid a fuss and get right to enjoying the better sprouts and other items. In the same spirit, I want to use up my CFLs. I have "enough" incandescent bulbs! So I populated my light rails with different wattages and type. The array of eight bulbs is just under 400 watts. And a very agreeable shadow-free, flicker-free, and startup-delay-not-apparent solution. It does look strange if you look up, but looking down and using the light is the goal after all

Note that I am inadvertently doing an experiment. All eight bulbs are getting the same duty cycle. All started out new. I am particularly interested to see if the Edison 100W outlives the CFL 100W.