PROPERTIES OF THE GROUP 1 ELEMENTS

	Li	Na	K	Rb	Cs	Fr
Melting point (°C)	180.5	97.8	63.25	38.89	28.5	27
Boiling point (°C)	1342	882.9	760	691	668	677
Density (g/cm^3)	0.534	0.971	0.862	1.53	1.87	—
Ionization energy (kJ/mol)	520	496	419	403	376	—
Atomic radius (pm)	152	186	227	248	265	270
Ionic radius (pm)	76	102	138	152	167	180
Common oxidation number in compounds	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	—
Crystal structure	bcc*	bcc	bcc	bcc	bcc	—
Hardness (Mohs' scale)	0.6	0.4	0.5	0.3	0.2	—

*body-centered cubic

APPLICATION *Technology*

Sodium Vapor Lighting

The flame test for sodium shows two bright lines at 589.0 and 589.6 nm, which is the yellow range of the emission spectrum. Sodium can be vaporized at high temperatures in a sealed tube and made to give off light using two electrodes connected to a power source. Sodium vapor lighting is often used along highways and in parking lots because it provides good illumination while using less energy than other types of lighting.

Sodium vapor lighting comes in both low-pressure and high-pressure bulbs. Low-pressure lamps reach an internal temperature of 270°C to vaporize the sodium under a pressure of about 1 Pa. High-pressure lamps contain mercury and xenon in addition to sodium. These substances reach an internal temperature of 1100°C under a pressure of about 100 000 Pa. The high-pressure lamp provides a higher light intensity. The design of both types of lamps must take into account the high reactivity of sodium, which increases at high temperatures. Because ordinary glass will react with sodium at 250°C, a special sodium-resistant glass is used for low-pressure lamps. High-pressure lamps use an aluminum oxide material for the column containing the sodium, mercury, and xenon. Both types of lamps contain tungsten electrodes.

The light intensity per watt for sodium vapor lamps far exceeds that of fluorescent lamps, high-pressure mercury vapor lamps, tungsten halogen lamps, and incandescent bulbs.