

What to Do When Mercury Spills

Avoid contact with spilled mercury until you decide who will be cleaning it up - you or a professional. In general, you can clean up small spills yourself (such as mercury from a fever thermometer, thermostat, or CFL bulb).

You should call a trained professional if the spill is larger, widely scattered, or on porous items like carpet that cannot be thrown out. Check local telephone listings under "Hazardous Waste" for a professional.

Small Spill Tips:

- Take children and pets to another room and open a window.
- Put on rubber gloves, if you have them.
- Avoid walking through the spill area.
- Never use a vacuum, mop, or broom.
- Use a piece of cardboard or something similar to collect beads of mercury and broken bits into a pile.
- Use damp paper towels or wide tape to pick up mercury and glass; wrap glass and seal all materials in a plastic bag.
- Call Lane County Waste Management (541.682.4120) and make an appointment for disposal at the Household Hazardous Waste Collection Center.

Additional Resources

FREE: Lane County Household Hazardous Waste Collection Center (by appointment only)
541.682.4120.

Lane County Recycling:
www.lanecounty.org/recycle

City of Springfield Recycling:
www.springfield-or.gov/city/development-public-works/recycling

NextStep Recycling (electronics): 541.686.2366
or www.nextsteprecycling.org

EPA Mercury Information:
www.epa.gov/mercury/

Oregon Poison Control Center: 1.800.222.1222
or 911 (in an emergency)



Mercury Safety

Protect your home, family, and environment from Mercury



City of Springfield
Development and Public Works Department

541.726.3694
www.springfieldstreams.org

Visit springfieldstreams.org or call us at
541.726.3694 for more information.

What is Mercury?

Mercury is a metallic element that evaporates very quickly with an odorless, colorless gas that is very toxic.

Broken or leaking devices that contain mercury can lead to big problems if not cleaned up and disposed of properly.

Mercury is easily absorbed and creates a cumulative effect in people and animals, as well as the environment.

The toxic effects of handling mercury include tremors, mood changes, slurred speech, hearing and vision loss, as well as severe organ damage.

There is no cure for mercury poisoning.

Common Household Sources of Mercury:

- Thermometers
- Electrical switches
- Fluorescent lights (including compact)
- Neon signs
- Thermostats
- Button-cell batteries
- Refrigerators & freezers
- Some chemical cleaning agents
- Paint manufactured prior to 1991

Where is Mercury Found?

In Nature:

- Stormwater runoff
- Rivers, streams, & oceans
- Rocks & sediment
- Atmospheric deposition

Human Impact on the Environment:

- Spills & improper disposal
- Cars & other transportation
- Metal production
- Coal burning & abandoned mines

Once mercury has entered a watershed, it is there to stay. It will cycle through the environment indefinitely and accumulate.



Help Keep Mercury Out of the Environment!

Preventing Mercury Exposure

- Replace items that contain mercury in your home with alternative products.
- Recycle compact fluorescent lights (CFLs) at the Lane County Household Hazardous Waste Collection Center or local lighting store.

- Always recycle appliances and button-cell batteries instead of throwing them in the trash.
- Participate in various hazardous waste round-up events in your community to safely dispose of mercury-containing products such as appliances, switches, reagents, and paints.