

MERCURY SPILLS IN CT
SCHOOLS AND HOMES HAVE
COST TENS OF THOUSANDS OF
DOLLARS TO CLEAN UP!

MERCURY SPILLS

If you have a mercury spill in your home, be careful!

- Do not touch mercury.
- Do not vacuum mercury.
- Do not clean-up with household cleaners.
- Do not flush down the toilet or put down the drain.
- Do not put mercury in the garbage.
- Follow spill clean-up guidelines provided by the agencies listed below.

Call for spill clean-up assistance, contact:

- CT DEP, Emergency Spills, 24hrs/day
(860) 424-3338
- CT Dept. of Public Health **(860) 509-7742**
- CT Poison Control **(800) 343-2722**
- CT DEP Office of Pollution Prevention,
8:30am - 4:30pm **(860) 424-3297**



Fish from Connecticut waters are a good low-cost source of protein. Fish take up toxic chemicals such as mercury that may affect your family's health. You and your family can safely eat most fish if you follow the guidelines put out by the CT Dept. of Public Health.

Check out the FISH CONSUMPTION INFORMATION at: www.dph.state.ct.us/BCH/EEOH/webfsh.htm or call (860) 509-7742 and ask for a free copy of "If I catch it, can I eat it?"

The DEP Office of Pollution Prevention has a variety of materials on mercury including an informative and colorful tabletop display available for free loan. The display is an excellent accompaniment to this brochure. Call (860) 424-3297 for more information or to arrange pick-up.

For more information about mercury, visit the DEP web site at www.dep.state.ct.us/wst/p2/index.htm and click on "Mercury".

Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection

EXPOSING MERCURY



At home



in school and



in the environment



Connecticut Department of
Environmental Protection (DEP)

Office of Pollution Prevention
Arthur J. Rocque, Jr., Commissioner
79 Elm Street, Hartford, CT 06106
(860)424-3297 <http://www.dep.state.ct.us>

WHAT IS MERCURY



Mercury is a silver-colored liquid metal.

Mercury is also known as "quicksilver" or "azogue."

Mercury is toxic. It becomes dangerous when it comes in contact with the air and vaporizes.

WHAT IS MERCURY USED FOR?



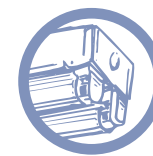
Mercury has been found in many household, medical, and industrial products.

Mercury is used in some school labs.

Mercury is used in some spiritual traditions for protection, spells, and spiritual cleansing.

WHY IS MERCURY A HEALTH PROBLEM?

- You can't see or smell **mercury vapor** from a spill, but it can still poison you.
- Children under the age of 6 and women who are pregnant or planning to get pregnant are most at risk to the health effects of **mercury exposure**.
- Eating fish contaminated by mercury can be dangerous to your health.
- **Short-term high levels** of exposure can cause headaches, lung damage, nausea, vomiting, skin rashes, diarrhea, increases in blood pressure and heart rate.
- Long-term high levels of exposure can lead to **permanent damage** to the brain, kidneys, and developing fetus.



Read labels and be aware of mercury-containing products. Choose alternatives to these products where possible.

■ **Mercury Thermometer**

*(silver bulb). Dispose at a Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Collection. **Substitute** an alcohol (red bulb) or digital thermometer.*

■ **Liquid mercury**

*(brought home as a novelty from school or work or for ritual use, such as *espiritismo*). Dispose at HHW Collection. **Consult** with spiritual advisor for substitutes.*

■ **Mercury switches**

*(found in convenience lighting in some automobiles). Have auto mechanic **replace** with mercury-free ball bearing switches.*

What you Can do About Products Containing Mercury

■ **Fluorescent light bulbs**

*(use them because they are very efficient). **Recycle** spent bulbs at HHW collection or town drop-off, if available.*

■ **Mercury gauge on a gas furnace:**

(If the meter was replaced, check the area around the furnace for signs of spillage.) If mercury is found, call one of the state agencies listed on the back of this brochure for spill clean-up assistance.

■ **Mercury thermostat.**

Dispose at HHW Collection. **Replace** with an electronic model.

Bring mercury-containing items to a Household Hazardous Waste Collection. Check the DEP web site or call your town for the schedule in your area.