

NEVER PLACE HEAVILY MERCURY-LADEN FABRICS IN A WASHING MACHINE.

MONITOR SPILL ZONE FOR MERCURY VAPORS:



Even if the impacted area appears clean, there may still be hidden residual quantities of mercury present that emit vapors. For larger-sized spills, it may be necessary to monitor (test) mercury vapor levels in the immediate area. If mercury is detected, re-clean the impacted area using previously mentioned procedures and repeat testing until levels fall to within safe parameters.

WASH HUMANS AND ANIMALS EXPOSED TO MERCURY using an alkaline soap (i.e., Lava soap) and a paste of water and flowers of sulfur. Flowers of sulfur can be found in most garden supply shops and will turn the mercury into an insoluble sulfide. Afterwards, the remaining residue should be thoroughly rinsed. All wash water containing mercury should be collected and kept out of the sanitary sewer system.

CONTINUE VENTILATION to completely air out the room or spill zone with outside air for a minimum of two days, preferably longer.

INVENTORY ALL REMAINING MERCURY-CONTAINING DEVICES AND REPLACE THEM WITH MERCURY FREE ALTERNATIVES: The best way to address a mercury spill is to prevent it from ever happening in the first place. For additional pollution prevention ideas and assistance contact the DEQ's Environmental Assistance Center at 800-662-9278.

Mercury (*elemental*) is a shiny silvery - White, odorless, heavy liquid metallic element used in thermometers, barometers, float valves, and other scientific apparatus.

Concerns about elemental toxicity led to mercury largely being phased out of thermometers in favor of alcohol-filled, digital, or thermistor-based instruments. However, mercury remains in use in a number of scientific research applications and dental fillings.

There are many forms of Mercury besides *elemental mercury (Hg)*. Mercury may cause temporary health effects when it is breathed as a vapor where it can be absorbed through the lungs. In more severe cases it may cause neurological effects depending on exposure time and concentration.

For additional information contact your local Health Department.



Additional Resources:

www.epa.gov (keywords: mercury human exposure)

www.michigan.gov/deq/ (keywords: mercury spill resources)

www.mercuryexposure.org

Poison Control Center 1-800-222-1222

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**CLEANING UP SMALL MERCURY SPILLS
(for spills of less than two tablespoons)**



MIDLAND COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT
220 WEST ELLSWORTH STREET
MIDLAND, MI 48640-5194
PHONE 989-832-6679
www.co.midland.mi.us/health

Note: Everything used during the cleanup procedure will need to be managed as “HAZARDOUS WASTE” unless you’re positive it has NOT been exposed to mercury. Although households are legally exempt from the hazardous waste regulations, it is recommended you seek disposal advice from your local County Health Department.

EVACUATE THE SPILL: Get everyone out of spill area site to a safe place in the home. Only allow persons cleaning up the spill in room. Children and pets should be kept clear of the spill area.

LOWER THE TEMPERATURE by turning down the thermostat. The cooler the temperature, the less evaporation that will be released into the air.

TURN OFF VENTILATING OR AIR CONDITIONING SYSTEMS that could circulate air from the spill area to other parts of the building. Make sure vent ducts located in spill area are closed off or place a plastic bag over the vent taped to the floor.

CLOSE INTERIOR DOORS to isolate spill.

VENTILATE THE ROOM to the outdoors by opening a window.



NEVER USE A HOUSEHOLD VACUUM CLEANER OR SHOP VAC TO CLEAN UP MERCURY! (THESE DEVICES ARE NOT ADEQUATELY FILTERED AND WILL SPREAD MERCURY VAPORS.)

ASSEMBLE CLEAN UP SUPPLIES or obtain a mercury spill kit. Mercury spill kits are commercially available and convenient, but not absolutely necessary to clean up a small mercury spill.

Contact your local Health Department for safe cleanup methods and spill kit advice.



DRESS APPROPRIATELY: Remove all jewelry from hands and wrists so the mercury does not combine (amalgamate) with the precious metals—*yellow gold will turn to silver in color, if exposed.* Change into old clothes and shoes that can be safely discarded should they happen to become contaminated. Put on rubber gloves and goggles or safety glasses.

NEVER USE A BROOM ON A MERCURY SPILL BECAUSE IT WILL ONLY SCATTER THE MERCURY DROPLETS, MAKING THEM HARDER TO FIND AND PICK UP.

PICK UP ALL VISIBLE MERCURY DROPLETS: Inspect the spill zone with a bright light to help illuminate any hidden droplets. Clean up any metallic beads of mercury by using a plastic squeegee or index card and plastic dust pan.

NEXT, GENTLY TRANSFER MERCURY INTO AN UNBREAKABLE PLASTIC CONTAINER like a 35mm film canister or margarine container with a locking or air tight lid (avoid using glass). If necessary, suction off the droplets using an eye dropper or syringe. Adhesive tape strips may also be used to clean up any tiny remaining mercury droplets. Place the plastic container inside a second plastic container to provide additional containment protection.

PLACE THE MERCURY WASTE CONTAINER(S) INTO A ZIP-TOP PLASTIC BAG. This should ensure that in the event of any leakage, all mercury will be safely contained within the packaging.

NEVER POUR LIQUID MERCURY OR MERCURY COMPOUNDS DOWN THE DRAIN. SINCE MERCURY IS HEAVIER THAN WATER, IT WILL ACCUMULATE IN THE S-TRAP OF YOUR DRAIN AND MAY CONTINUE TO EMIT HARMFUL VAPORS.

REMOVE AND DISPOSE OF CONTAMINATED CARPETING AND OTHER ARTICLES: Removal of fastened carpeting may be necessary depending on amount of spill. Contact your local Health Department for further instructions.

