



# Mercury In Our Homes



It is not uncommon for homeowners to use or acquire or find products containing liquid mercury in their homes. Elemental mercury, a silver colored metal is used in many household products. It is known to be toxic to humans, but when safely encased it is not a health threat. When mishandled, however, broken mercury containing products can become a source for exposure that could pose personal risk.

In order to protect health and the environment, safe and proper storage of mercury is vital! Mercury-containing products have no alternative disposal options and must be saved for a household hazardous waste collection.

- **What If You Have Mercury-Containing Products in Your Home?**

Products containing liquid mercury should be replaced with safer alternatives. Thermometers and blood pressure devices are available in electronic form and many older mercury-containing thermostats can be replaced with newer digital ones. All mercury-containing devices that have been replaced should be saved for a household hazardous waste collection and should never be thrown away with the trash. To minimize potential hazards, keep mercury-containing products in an airtight, leak-proof container. Until material is delivered to a collection, keep the container stored out of reach of children and away from any potential breakage.

- **What You Should Do If You Have Elemental Mercury in Your Home?**

Many people have containers of elemental mercury in their homes left over from science projects or other sources. Elemental mercury is a shiny, silver-gray metal that is liquid at room temperature. If you have elemental mercury in your home, you need to exercise extreme caution with it and package it to contain any leaks.

- **Packaging Mercury For Storage and Transportation**

1. All mercury-containing products or containers of mercury should be placed inside a larger container with a tight fitting lid.

2. Kitty litter or oil absorbent should be placed around the product to protect it from breaking or sudden shocks.
3. Clearly label storage container as "Mercury-DO NOT OPEN".
4. Transport containers to a household hazardous waste collection in a cardboard box and secure them so that they do not tip over and to minimize shifting or sliding during sudden stops or turns.
5. Transport in the back of a pickup truck or in a car trunk. If you must transport in the passenger compartment, make sure there is adequate ventilation.

- **What To Do If You Have a Mercury Spill**

All mercury spills, regardless of quantity, should be treated seriously.

**Do**

- Leave the area if you are not involved in the cleanup.
- Open windows and doors to ventilate the area.
- Collect very small amounts of mercury with adhesive tape or an eyedropper. Store it in a sealed plastic container for transport to a household hazardous waste collection.

**Do Not**

- Use a vacuum cleaner to clean up mercury. A vacuum cleaner will spread mercury vapors and tiny droplets and increase the area of contamination.

## 2021 YEAR-ROUND DROP-OFF

**MILWAUKEE**

6060 S 13th St

Tuesday 11am - 6pm; Saturday 8am - 2pm

Closed 5/29, 7/3, 9/4, 11/27, 12/25, 1/1/22

**MILWAUKEE**

3879 W Lincoln Ave

Thursday 7am - 3pm; Friday 7am - 3pm;

Saturday 7am - 3pm

Closed 7/3, 11/25, 11/26, 12/24, 12/25, 1/1/22

**MENOMONEE FALLS**

W124 N9451 Boundary Rd Monday

Monday 11am - 6pm; Wednesday 11am - 6pm;

Saturday 8am - 2pm

Closed 5/29, 5/31, 7/3, 9/4, 11/26, 11/27, 12/24,  
12/25, 1/1/22