

Mercury Management & Safety Procedures

Mercury can be found in several household products such as thermometers, thermostats, barometers and fluorescent lamps. Quantities of elemental (liquid) mercury may be present in residential homes.

When mercury is released into the environment, it can accumulate in people and wildlife, especially fish. Those especially susceptible to the negative effects of mercury are children, pregnant women, nursing mothers, and women of child bearing years. Mercury pollution is a local problem and Massachusetts residents have been cautioned to limit eating fish caught in certain lakes and rivers due to elevated mercury levels.

The amount of mercury in a small thermometer, 1 gram, is enough to contaminate a 20 acre lake, and render 1 ton of fish unfit to eat.

Covanta SEMASS, LP is committed to assisting SEMASS long term contracted communities with the following programs:

- Free mercury recycling through the town. This includes all fluorescent lamps, thermostats and thermometers in addition to all other mercury containing devices. Check with the municipality's Department of Public Works or Board of Health for details.
- Free pick up of elemental mercury provided by Complete Recycling Solutions (CRS). **Do not move/handle elemental mercury.** Call CRS @ 866-CRS-9797 to arrange for an on-site pick up of elemental mercury and Covanta SEMASS will pay the bill.

Contact Information for:

Spills:



If the spill involves one pound of mercury (about two tablespoons) or more, you must report the spill to the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) within two hours from the time when you became aware of the release. To report a spill, call the MassDEP Emergency Response spill line at 1-888-304-1133. SEMASS will only fund preventative measures, such as collections and training, and will not provide reimbursement for a spill.

General questions:

For more information, visit <https://www.mass.gov/guides/massdep-mercury-information>, <http://www.keepmercuryfromrising.org>, or contact Patti Howard/Covanta SEMASS at 508-962-7398

Clean Up Procedures (MassDEP):

Fluorescent Lamps -

<https://www.mass.gov/files/documents/2018/01/11/cleanup-cfls.pdf>

Elemental/Liquid Mercury -

<https://www.mass.gov/files/documents/2018/01/11/cleanup-hgspill.pdf>

Contact the Board of Health for more information



The Massachusetts Mercury Management Act prohibits the disposal of mercury-containing products in the trash. SEMASS, owner of the waste-to-energy facility in West Wareham, MA where your trash goes, is committed to help prevent mercury from getting into the waste stream.



Mercury Barometer



MassDEP Clean-up Procedures for Broken Fluorescent Lamps: (hard surfaces: wood, linoleum, etc.)

DO NOT USE A VACUUM OR BROOM TO CLEAN UP A BROKEN BULB

1. Cordon off the area where breakage occurred so that nobody steps in broken glass, phosphor powder or mercury. This should be done as soon as possible.
2. If there is a window or door that opens to the outside, open it to ventilate the area and wait about 15 minutes. If the bulb broke outside, or in an inside area where there is no window or door to the outside, do not wait to clean up.
3. Wearing disposable gloves, use stiff paper or cardboard to carefully push the glass and powder to a central point where you can scoop it up, being careful not to get it on your clothing.
4. Place the collected fragments into a rigid plastic or glass container. If no rigid container is available, a double-bagged set of resealable freezer bags should suffice. If you need to further break the glass to fit it into the container, do this outside, being careful not to cut yourself.
5. Use sticky tape, such as duct tape, to pick up any visible glass shards, powder or mercury and place it in the container.
6. Then, using wet wipes or moist paper towels, wipe the area thoroughly. Place used towels and disposable gloves into the container and close it tightly. Once closed, do not re-open it to put more material in.
7. Label the container "Universal Waste – Broken fluorescent lamp" and date it. Place the container in the same place you store unbroken bulbs.

MassDEP Clean-up Procedures for an Elemental (liquid) Mercury Spill:

When mercury is spilled, it evaporates and gives off hazardous vapors that are invisible and odorless. If you spill mercury or break a product that contains mercury, it is important that it be cleaned up immediately.

DO NOT USE A BROOM OR A VACUUM TO CLEAN UP A MERCURY SPILL!

1. Get all people not involved in cleanup out of the area to minimize tracking mercury into other areas.
2. Delineate the area that may have mercury droplets with string, tape or other materials. Be careful not to step in the mercury droplets.
3. Move all objects (e.g., furniture, boxes) away from the spill.
4. If possible, open a window or door to ventilate with outside air.
5. If the spill involves one pound of mercury (about two tablespoons) or more, you must report the spill to the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) within two hours from the time when you became aware of the release. To report a spill, call the MassDEP Emergency Response spill line at 1-888-304-1133.
6. Remove all jewelry from your hands and wrists, since mercury bonds with most metals. Put on disposable gloves. Do not touch the mercury with your bare hands.
7. Use index cards or other stiff paper to push the mercury beads you can see together. Lift the mercury beads into a glass jar or rigid plastic container (two index cards may be used together to lift the beads). If a glass or rigid plastic container is not available, use a sealable plastic bag in the interim.
8. If there are small beads that you cannot get up with the stiff paper, you can pick them up with sticky tape.
9. Wipe the entire delineated area with a damp paper towel or wet wipe.
 - If you have a mercury spill kit with a treated sponge, use that to wipe the area, or
 - If you have a mercury spill cleanup product, such as zinc or sulfur powder, follow the specific instructions from the manufacturer for its use.
10. Place all used materials used to clean up (e.g., powder or paste, used sponge, tape, used paper towel or wet wipes and used disposable gloves) in the glass jar, plastic container or sealable plastic bag.
11. If you are using a sealable plastic bag, try to find a glass jar with screw-on metal lid or rigid plastic container with tight fitting lid as soon as possible to contain the plastic bag and contents. Mercury vapors will pass through a sealed plastic bag or loosely closed container and will contaminate the air of the room the container is in.
12. Label your container with "Hazardous Waste - Mercury Contaminated Spill Cleanup Materials" and the date.
13. Dispose of the container with spill cleanup materials through a licensed hazardous waste management firm. If you are a business and this is your only hazardous waste, contact the Department of Public Works or Health Department in your community to see if a household hazardous waste collection event has been scheduled. Many municipalities will allow you to pay a small amount to include your waste with theirs. If no collection event is scheduled for the near future, visit: <http://www.mass.gov/dep/recycle/hazardous/transport.htm>