

DON'T MESS WITH MERCURY.

It is a heavy metal and a “persistent, bioaccumulative toxin,” or PBT.

Persistent = Lasts for a long time

Bioaccumulative = Builds up in organs and affects reproduction

Toxic = Poison

Yes, mercury exists naturally. But health and environmental problems arise because humans have concentrated mercury in ways that Mother Nature never would.

When handling products with mercury:

- Don't break, crush or disassemble the items.
- Store items out of the way in bubble wrap or boxes until you recycle them. Save the boxes that products came in for this purpose.
- If a product is accidentally broken, do not touch it and do not vacuum it up. Call the Poison Control Center for instructions at 1-800-222-1222.

Washington State Mercury Chemical Action Plan

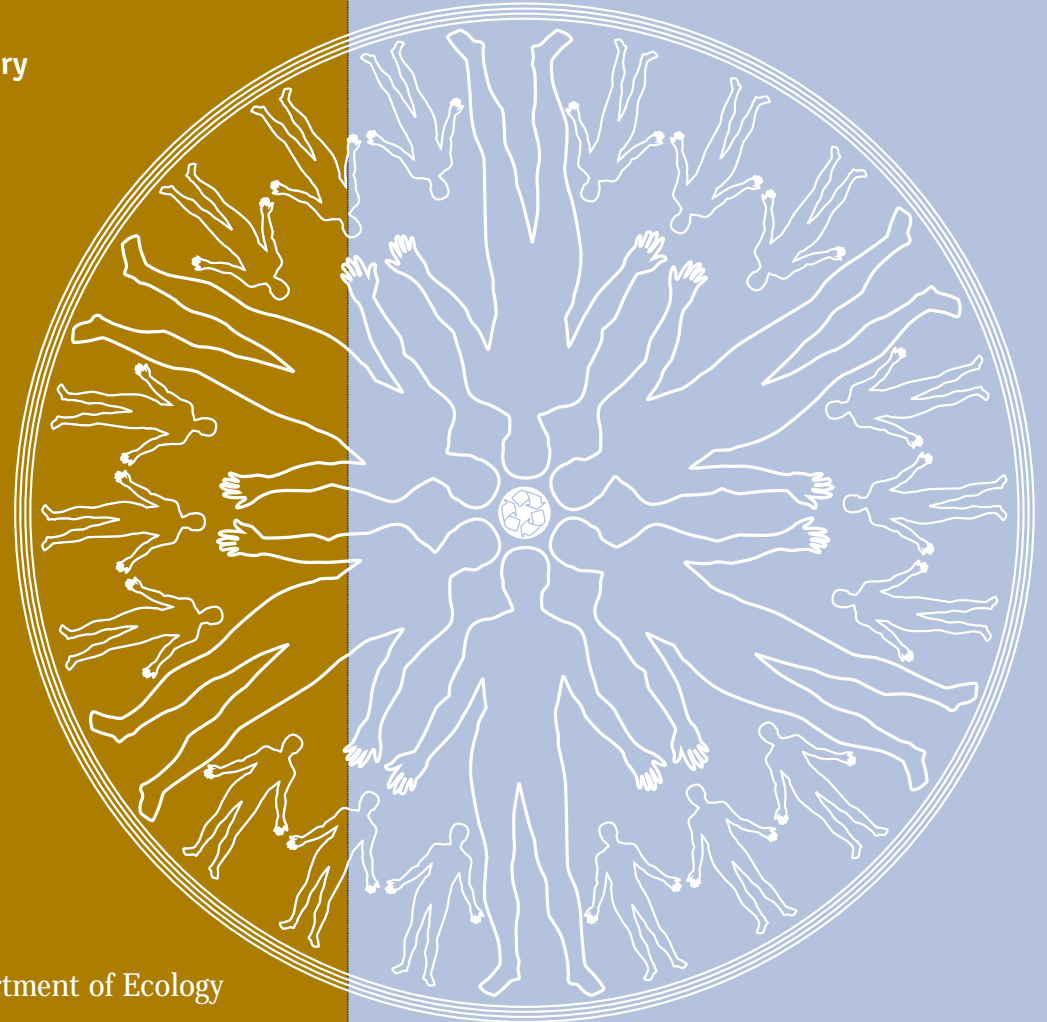


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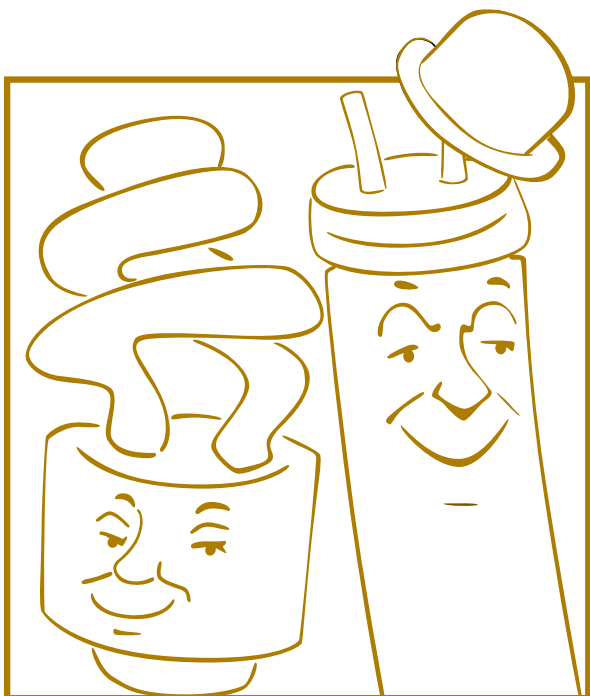


LIGHTING

Fluorescent tubes and bulbs are a good energy-saving lighting choice. But they do contain mercury and should be recycled. Other types of lamps with mercury are high-pressure sodium, metal halide (stadium lights and some car headlights) and some neon.



Washington businesses, public agencies and households throw away ten million fluorescent tubes or bulbs each year – releasing about 500 pounds of mercury into the environment.



DON'T BE A DIM BULB

Recycle your fluorescents 1-800-RECYCLE

THERMOSTATS

Structures built before 1980 likely contain older “manual” thermostats.



About 400 pounds of mercury waste from thermostats enters Washington's environment each year.



THERMOMETERS

Fever thermometers with silver liquid contain mercury – many good alternatives are available.

About one million Washington households have mercury fever thermometers. If broken, they pose health and environmental threats.

Mercury is also used in dental amalgam, manufacturing processes and laboratories. It is a waste product in mining and manufacturing.

1/2 ton of mercury waste can be kept out of Washington's environment each year by simply recycling these common products.

For information about mercury recycling in your area, call 1-800-RECYCLE or visit www.mercurymess.org.

Every day we learn more and more about the health and environmental risks posed by mercury.

All of us are threatened by it, and each of us can make a difference.

On behalf of the Department of Ecology, thank you for doing your part to protect Washington's people and our environment from mercury contamination.

*Tom Fitzsimmons, Director
Department of Ecology*



MERCURY TIPS

PREVENTING MERCURY POLLUTION IN WASHINGTON

Mercury pollution in Washington state comes from mining, petroleum use, coal-powered plants, manufacturing and refineries.

Many common household and commercial products also contain mercury – fluorescent lights, thermostats and thermometers. These should be recycled – never tossed in the trash or down the drain where they can be dispersed in our air, land and water.

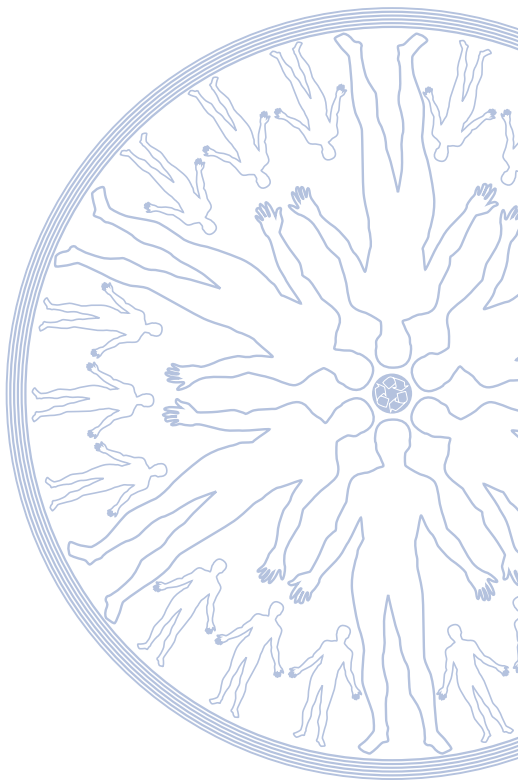
Once in the environment, mercury can work its way up through the food chain. The most common way that humans can be exposed to mercury is by eating contaminated fish.

WATER CONTAMINATED WITH MERCURY

At least 30 lakes, rivers and bays in Washington fail environmental standards due to too much mercury in water, fish or sediments. Cleanups are planned or under way for all of these. For more information about water cleanup, contact Kai Aitchison at 360-407-6456 or go to www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/links/impaired_wtrs.html.

PROPERTY CONTAMINATED WITH MERCURY

Another 15 properties are being cleaned up due to soil contaminated with mercury. For more information about toxic cleanup of mercury, contact Sherrie Minnick at 360-407-7200 or www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/tcp/clean_up.html



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www.mercurymess.org.**

MERCURY TIPS

MERCURY AND HUMAN HEALTH

We can all take steps to reduce risk of exposure to mercury. We'll be safer, the environment will be cleaner and future generations will benefit from our efforts to eliminate mercury waste today.

Unfortunately, humans and other animals carry in their bodies trace amounts of mercury from many sources over their life-time.

World-wide studies document mercury's health effects in infants and children whose mothers were exposed during pregnancy.

Some children had abnormal tendon reflexes that caused them to walk on their toes. At very high levels of mercury exposure, children had cerebral palsy, limb deformities and blindness. In most studies, learning and language problems were observed.

The most likely source of human exposure to mercury is by eating contaminated fish.

National advisories warn against eating too much tuna, swordfish, tile fish and mackerel.

Health advisories for mercury-contaminated fish and shellfish also have been issued in five Washington areas:

- Eagle Harbor on Bainbridge Island
- Sinclair Inlet near Bremerton
- Lake Whatcom in Bellingham
- Lake Roosevelt near Grand Coulee
- Lower Duwamish in Seattle

Fish advisories: Washington Department of Health at www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/oehas or 1-877-485-7316

Recent and ongoing studies of mercury's health effects: Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry: www.atsdr.cdc.gov/tfacts46.html or 1-877-485-7316.



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MERCURY TIPS

FOR BUSINESSES & PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

- Building maintenance, management
- Auto & heavy equipment repair
- Auto & building demolition, salvage
- Home remodeling
- Heating or lighting services

These products may contain mercury and should be recycled:

- Lighting – fluorescents, metal halide and others
- Electric thermostats
- Flame sensors or probes
- Switches & relays

Avoid breaking any mercury-containing items. Safe storage and clear labeling are essential.

- Store fluorescents and other mercury lamps in original packaging and out of the way. Do not tape tubes together. Label appropriately.
- All other items with mercury should be stored and labeled in separate sealed containers.

Keep invoices from your mercury recycler and make sure they include:

- Date of pick-up or shipment
- Number or weight of items
- Where it is being shipped

For mercury recycling arrangements
in the King County area, contact:

- Total Reclaim/EcoLights NW
206-343-7443
www.ecolights.com
- Business Waste Line
206-296-3976
www.metrokc.gov/hazwaste/smallbiz/
- Business & Industry Resource Venture
www.resourceventure.org/wp_recycling.htm

FREE THERMOSTAT RECYCLING

- Gensco Seattle
1824 Ship Avenue
206-682-7591
- RSD
625 Industrial Way
206-623-8005

**For information about mercury recycling
in your area, call 1-800-RECYCLE or visit
www.mercurymess.org.**

For mercury recycling arrangements
in the Spokane area, contact:

- Philip Environmental
1-800-228-7872
- Total Reclaim/EcoLights NW
206-343-7443
www.ecolights.com
- Spokane Solid Waste
509-625-7898
Free technical assistance

FREE THERMOSTAT RECYCLING

- Johnstone Supply
E. 1212 Front
509-533-9911
- RSD
212 E. Pacific
509-838-0593
- Gensco Spokane
5808 E. Sharp
509-534-2043

**For information about mercury recycling
in your area, call 1-800-RECYCLE or visit
www.mercurymess.org.**

For mercury recycling arrangements
in the Clark County area, contact:

- Philip Service
360-835-8743
- Total Reclaim/EcoLights NW
206-343-7443
www.ecolights.com

FREE THERMOSTAT RECYCLING

- Gensco Vancouver
11304 N.E. 66th St., #105
360-885-2013

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in your area, call 1-800-RECYCLE or visit
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