

## When Mercury-Added Products Break, what do you do?

<b>Mercury Spill?</b>			
<b>LESS than 2 tablespoons<sup>1</sup></b>		<b>MORE than 2 tablespoons<sup>2</sup></b>	
<b>Call MassDEP Mercury Programs Hotline at 866-963-7287</b>	Turn off HVAC <sup>3</sup> and <b>DO NOT</b> clean up with bare skin, vacuum, or broom.	This is an environmental emergency, <b>call 911 or MassDEP 24/7 Spill Hotline at 888-304-1133</b>	Turn off HVAC and evacuate the premises. <b>DO NOT</b> try to clean up the spill.

<sup>1</sup> Release of vapors or small quantities of mercury are not considered an emergency. However, they should be cleaned up immediately and with caution. The Hotline at 866-963-7287 is a voicemailbox and someone will return your call within a few business days. See below for more information on disposal and clean up.

<sup>2</sup> If you suspect that the mercury spill contains more than 2 tablespoons (tbsp) of liquid, call 911 immediately. The MassDEP Spill Hotline at 888-304-1133 is a direct line to first responders and is always available, day or night.

<sup>3</sup> Heating, ventilation, and air conditioning system.

## How to clean up mercury spills of LESS than 2 tbsp

### IMPORTANT! Call 911 for mercury spills of MORE than 2 tbsp

Please read ALL the steps completely before starting the clean-up process. Some steps only pertain to **liquid** clean up, and are marked clearly as Liquid. All other steps can be used to address a mercury **vapor release**.

1. Evacuate the room (including animals) and turn off the HVAC immediately.
2. Open all windows and doors that lead outside. Close all doors between the room with the spill and the rest of the house.
3. Liquid: Look for spilled liquid mercury beads on hard flat surfaces, cracks and crevices, or porous materials. Check shoes and clothing for contamination. Contaminated carpet and clothing must be disposed of as hazardous waste and cannot be washed or cleaned. NEVER put mercury-added products in the trash can or pour liquid mercury down the drain.
4. NEVER use a broom or vacuum to clean spilled mercury liquid. Anything that touches the mercury must be disposed of as hazardous waste. Instead, collect as many of the following items for clean-up as possible:
  - a. **Rubber, nitrile or latex gloves**- never touch mercury with your bare hands
  - b. **Paper towels**- both dry and wet with water
  - c. **Plastic trash bags (preferably large Zip locking bags)**- 2 or more to collect all contaminated items, date and label the bag with the words "Universal Waste- Mercury Containing Device"
  - d. **Cardboard**- to use as a squeegee
  - e. **Flashlight**- to shine on liquid mercury beads
  - f. **Eyedropper**- to suck up liquid mercury beads
  - g. **Shaving Cream and a small paint brush**- for tiny hard to get liquid beads
  - h. **Sticky tape**- for small glass shards
  - i. **Powdered Sulfur (optional)** - to absorb beads that are too small to see and prevent mercury from vaporizing into the room. Powdered sulfur can sometimes be found in hardware stores
5. Put gloves on. While wearing gloves, pick up all contaminated mercury items and place them on a paper towel. Fold the paper towel gently so sharp edges do not poke through the plastic bag.
6. Place the paper towel with the mercury contaminated items into the labelled plastic bag. Keep the bag available for the spilled mercury and the materials used to clean-up the spill. At the completion of the clean-up, give it to your local health or fire department.
7. Use a piece of cardboard to collect all broken glass and
  - a. Liquid: Slowly gather all beads of mercury. By using a flashlight in a dark room, you can see the beads of mercury glisten. Check all cracks and crevices in the floor and check areas further away from the location where you would suspect mercury might have traveled.
8. Liquid: Use an eyedropper to suck up beads of mercury and gently drop them onto a wet paper towel. All liquid mercury should be put into the same labeled zip bag with the other contaminated items.
9. Liquid: Shaving cream on top of a small paint brush can be used to pick up smaller beads. The paintbrush must also be put in the labeled zip bag after use.
10. Sticky tape can be used to pick up small shards of glass. Place all tape in the zip bag.
11. Liquid: Powdered Sulfur can be sprinkled in the area where the mercury-added product broke. It will turn a different color when in contact with mercury. Sulfur binds to mercury, which makes it easier to

clean. It can sometimes be found for purchase in hardware stores. Do not breathe in the powder and avoid getting it on your clothes.

12. When you have completed the clean-up steps listed above, carefully take off your gloves and place them in the bag and zip the bag closed. Place this bag into another plastic bag of the same size or larger.
13. Ventilate the room where the mercury spilled and turn off the HVAC for 24 hours. Do not let people or pets enter the room for 24 hours. Mercury liquid can vaporize and be inhaled by humans and animals. If you suspect that you might have mercury poisoning, contact your medical professional for a blood test.
14. If mercury has touched your skin, shoes, or clothing, remain still and have someone bring you a plastic trash bag and wet paper towels. Wipe off any visible beads of mercury with the wet paper towels and put the contaminated towels into the trash bag. Remove contaminated shoes and clothing and place them in a trash bag. Seal that bag and place it in a second plastic trash bag.
15. Place all materials used in the cleanup, including gloves, clothing, and shoes that have come in contact with liquid mercury, in a trash bag. Place the zipper-top bags that contain mercury and other objects into the trash bag. Close and seal the trash bag and place it in a safe place outside your house. Label the bag as directed by your local health or fire department.
16. Contact your City/Town Hall for information as to where you can dispose of your bag of mercury contaminated items.

*For more information on disposing of broken mercury-added products, contact your local Board of Health or Fire Department. Most Household Hazardous Waste Events will collect broken mercury-added products.*