



### SPILLS IN A DRAIN

- Mercury will get caught in a sink trap. Working over a large tray or box, remove the trap and pour the contents into a wide-mouth container
- Seal the container with duct tape
- Place the container and cleanup supplies (sink trap, gloves, etc) in a plastic bag, seal and label "mercury waste"
- Place bag in a second plastic bag, seal and label "mercury waste"

### BROKEN FLUORESCENT OR OTHER MERCURY VAPOR CONTAINING LAMPS

- Using cardboard pieces, carefully scoop up mercury-containing glass pieces and powder
- Place glass and powder in a plastic bottle/container
- Seal container with duct tape and label "mercury waste"
- Place container and cleanup supplies (contaminated tape, cardboard and gloves, etc.) in a plastic bag, seal and label "mercury waste"
- Place bag in a second plastic bag, seal and label "mercury waste"

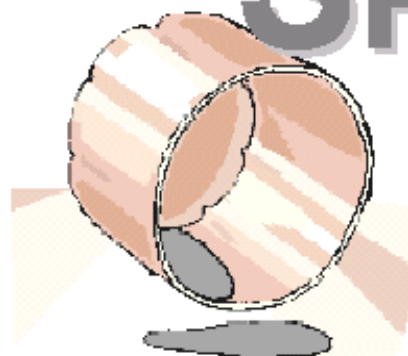
Call **HHW** to schedule a drop off appointment - **408-299-7300**

For a list of mercury-containing products log on to [www.hhw.org](http://www.hhw.org).



The Department of Environmental Health Mercury Education Project is funded by a grant from the California Integrated Waste Management Board

# MERCURY SPILLS



## Cleanup and Safety



- Call for help & information -  
Household Hazardous Waste Program  
**408-299-7300**

Mercury can be found in household, commercial and industrial products in liquid or vapor form. Elemental mercury is a shiny liquid, silver-white in color and is found in thermometers, thermostats and irons. Mercury vapor, a colorless, odorless gas, is found in fluorescent, high intensity discharge, neon and some automotive headlamps. Elemental mercury when spilled (at room temperature) can break up into small droplets and evaporate to form mercury vapor.

Exposure to Elemental mercury or mercury vapor is toxic, especially to children and infants. Mercury exposure can adversely impact nervous system development. Contact your physician or a poison control center immediately if you or your children have been exposed to mercury liquid or vapor.

**For help and information -  
Call HHW at 408-299-7300**

#### CAUTIONS

- NEVER touch mercury with bare hands
- NEVER use a vacuum cleaner on a mercury spill it will cause vaporization
- NEVER use a broom to cleanup a mercury spill it will cause the mercury to break up into smaller beads which will be difficult to collect
- NEVER put mercury waste down the drain, in the trash or incinerator
- NEVER use household cleaners to cleanup mercury spills

#### MANAGING SPILL AREA

- Keep all people and pets away from the spill area
- Shut doors and all air vents to spill area to avoid spreading contamination
- Cool down spill area by opening windows or doors facing the outdoors for two days if possible - use fans to pull air outside to decrease vaporization
- Remove any contaminated clothing and shoes before exiting spill area (Place contaminated clothing in plastic bags with other "mercury waste")
- Contain mercury spill by diking the surrounding area with rags or other disposable items – a flashlight will help locate Mercury since it reflects light

#### ASSEMBLE NECESSARY CLEANUP EQUIPMENT

- Neoprene gloves
  - Permanent marker
  - Pieces of cardboard
  - Flashlight
  - Rags
  - Plastic soda bottles or wide-mouth container
  - Large tray or box
  - Duct tape
  - Cuttingutensil
  - Plastic bags
  - Eyedropper or small baster
- Put gloves on before entering spill area. Following cleanup, remove gloves carefully turning inside out to avoid touching mercury and wash hands.

#### SPILLS ON HARD SURFACES

- Using cardboard pieces, push beads of mercury together
- Using eyedropper suction up mercury or use cardboard to lift up beads
- Carefully place mercury in plastic soda bottle/container, seal with duct tape
- Pick up remaining beads with tape.
- Place container and cleanup supplies (contaminated tape, rags, eyedropper, cardboard and gloves, etc.) in a plastic bag, seal and label "mercury waste"
- Place bag in a second plastic bag, seal and label "mercury waste"

#### SPILLS ON CARPET OR RUG

- Cut out a section of carpet/rug a bit larger than the mercury-containing area to ensure that all the mercury is captured
- Place cut-out section, gloves and cutting utensil in container
- Seal container with duct tape and label "mercury waste"
- Place container in a plastic bag, seal and label "mercury waste"

#### SPILLS IN A SINK OF WATER

- Remove as much water as possible without disturbing the mercury at the bottom (since mercury sinks to the bottom)
- Suction mercury from the bottom with eyedropper
- Empty the eyedropper into a plastic soda bottles or wide-mouth container
- Seal container with duct tape
- Place container and cleanup supplies (gloves, eyedropper, etc.) in a plastic bag, seal and label "mercury waste"
- Place bag in a second plastic bag, seal and label "mercury waste"