



Michigan Department of Environmental Quality

Sources of Mercury

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Automobiles

Mercury is used in automotive applications for various items such as lighting, antitheft systems, antilock brakes and air bags. These mercury switches should be removed before the crushing of any vehicle to ensure proper mercury handling and recycling (pollution prevention).

- [Removing and Recycling Automotive Mercury Switches](#) (pdf)
- [Removing and Recycling Automotive Mercury Switches](#) - Spanish version (pdf)
- [Mercury Switch Recycling Program](#) (ELVS)
- [Mercury Switch Removal Video: "The 48 Second Solution"](#) (50MB)

Michigan Automotive Switch Studies

- [Auto In-Service Mercury Switch Review](#) (pdf)
- [MI Mercury Switch Study](#) (pdf)

Proceedings for the Mercury Switch Informational Meeting

- [Overview of Mercury: Fate in the Environment and Associated Concerns](#), Joy Taylor Morgan, MDEQ
- [Mercury Releases From Steel Recycling and Production: Federal Regulations and Programs](#), Alexis Cain, Region 5 Mercury Coordinator, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- Department of Environmental Quality Mercury Reduction Programs:
 - [Atmospheric Sources](#), Air Quality Division, MDEQ
 - [Water Sources](#), Water Bureau, MDEQ
 - [Pollution Prevention](#), Environmental Science and Services Division (ESSD), MDEQ
- [The M2S2 Experience - Preventing Mercury From Entering Wastewater](#), Corky Overmeyer, Director, Environmental Services Department, City of Grand Rapids
- [The M2S2 Experience - Tales From a Clean Sweep Site](#), Tom Dewhirst, Kalamazoo County

Commercial

- [Spills: Michigan Department of Community Health](#)
- [Waste Reduction Fact Sheet](#)
- [Mercury in the Workplace](#)

Demolition

- [Before you Tear it Down, Get the Mercury Out](#)

Food/Fish Consumption

While consuming seafood is a part of a well-balanced diet almost all fish and shellfish contain traces of methylmercury. Ingesting higher levels of mercury could harm an unborn baby or a child's nervous system. The risks from methylmercury depend on how much fish and shellfish are consumed and the relative levels of methylmercury in the fish.

- [Fish Eating Advisories](#)
- [Fish Contaminant Monitoring Program](#)
- [FAQ about Fish Consumption](#)

Health Effects / Exposure to Mercury

- [Michigan Department of Community Health: Mercury Spills](#)
- [Exposure to Mercury via the Air](#)
- [Information on Controlling Mercury Exposure](#)
- [Mercury Health Effects](#)
- [EPA: Integrated Risk Information System](#)
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Healthcare/Medical

When no mercury-free alternatives are available, best management practices (BMP's) are the recommended way to go. This would involve such things as selecting the product or device that contains the lowest amount of mercury and is packaged so as to provide the most protection against leaks or breakage. Best management practices would also assure proper labeling, development of spill response plans, and training for individuals responding to mercury emergencies. Safe storage, handling, use, transport and recycling are also important considerations of BMP's.

Dentistry:

- [Dental Mercury Environmental Issues](#)
- [Dental Waste Management](#)
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Mercury Containing Products:

- [Waste Reduction and Proper Waste Management of Products Containing Mercury](#)
- [Electric Lamp Recycling](#)
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Medical:

- [Healthcare Products containing Mercury and Alternatives](#)
- [Environmental Dental Mercury Management](#)
- [Best Management Practices for Hospital Waste](#)
- [Sustainable Hospitals](#)
- [Health Care without Harm: Mercury](#)
- [Reducing Mercury Use in Health Care \(NEWMOA\)](#)
- [EPA Mercury Site](#)

Home

Household items may contain Mercury. To avoid exposure to mercury vapors one should educate themselves of proper care and handling of these items along with the correct way to dispose and recycle them. Listed below are links providing information on common household items containing mercury and mercury free alternatives.

- [Household Products containing Mercury and Alternatives](#)
- [Waste Reduction Fact Sheet](#)
- [Thermometers](#)
- [Finding Mercury in Your Home](#)
- [Mercury Use Tree](#)
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Schools

Mercury is used in many items found in schools, such as barometers, switches, thermostats, lighting, and in chemistry and science labs. The most common ways that spills occur in schools are from people not handling these items properly and not storing the items correctly. The following web sites provide information on what Michigan is doing to remove Mercury from schools along with Mercury free alternatives.

- [The Phasing Out of Mercury in Schools](#)
- [Mercury and Chemical Management in Schools](#)
- [Science Teacher Brochure](#)
- [Educational Classroom Activity](#)
- [Senate Bill #1262--Revised school code](#) (pdf file)
- Kids Video: "[Mission Mercury](#)". This video was produced by a group of students in cooperation with folks at the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation.

Schools - Mercury Phase-out

Over the past several years, numerous mercury spills have been documented in schools, sometimes costing as much as \$250,000 to clean up. The high cost and dangers to those exposed have prompted widespread public concern about mercury. As these stories became more widely known, the incidents prompted the Michigan Legislators to take action.

According to [Public Act 376](#) of 2000 (Enrolled [Senate Bill #1262](#)), Michigan schools must phase out mercury use in the classroom and in the health (nurse's) office. This law applies to liquid (free flowing) elemental mercury, as well as, mercury-containing instruments such as thermometers, barometers, manometers, and sphygmomanometers (blood pressure gauges). Schools have until 2004 to complete this process.

- [Michigan's Schools and School Districts that have responded to MDCH as being "Mercury-Free"](#)

Other mercury uses potentially found in the building such as in thermostats, light switches, relays or fluorescent lights, are **not** impacted by this legislation.

- [Mercury in Schools](#)
- [Clancy the Mercury-Detecting Dog](#) (Minnesota Pollution Control Agency)
- [Illinois Department of Public Health--Mercury Spills](#)

News Items: Mercury in Schools

- [Mercury Use in School Classrooms: Summary and Assessment of Non-Mercury Alternatives](#) (pdf)

Mercury Products and Sources

A compilation of lists that provide information about mercury containing products and devices.

Municipal

- [POTW Mercury Inventory Checklist](#)
- [Blueprint for Mercury Reduction](#) - WWTP sources from the collection system

Industrial

- [Sources of Mercury in Industrial Facilities](#)
- [A Guide to Mercury Reduction in Industrial and Commercial Settings](#)

Consumer and Products

- [Consumer and Commercial Products](#)
- [Substance Flow Analysis of Mercury in Products](#)
- [MASCO Mercury Products Database](#)
- [Mercury Use Tree](#) (created by Carri Lohse-Hanson, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA))
- [Consumer Products Known to Contain Mercury & Alternatives](#) (Word document)

Miscellaneous

- [Wisconsin Mercury Sourcebook](#) - community resources
- [Mercury Use Reduction and Waste Prevention in Medical Facilities](#)