

Mercury Spill Quick Guide (for Homes)



If mercury is spilled:

1. STOP! DO NOT VACUUM or SWEEP.
2. Get people and pets out of the room.
3. Open all windows and doors to the outdoors in the room where the mercury spilled.
4. Close all air returns, vents, and registers in the room.
5. Cover the spill area with plastic.
6. Close all doors in the room where the mercury spilled that go to the rest of the house.
7. Call your health department.
8. Don't worry! You may be able to clean up the mercury yourself.

For more details, turn the page...

Step 1: STOP! Do not vacuum or sweep.



- Vacuuming and sweeping can spread the mercury and put more vapor into the air. Mercury could also stick to the metal in your vacuum cleaner, which could ruin it.
- If you have already vacuumed, stop using your vacuum now.
- Put the vacuum outside until it can be tested for mercury.

Step 2: Get people and pets out of the room.

- Be careful as you leave the room. Stay away from the area where the mercury spilled.
- As soon as you can, take off the clothes and shoes you were wearing when the mercury spilled.
- Put your clothes and shoes in a plastic bag and set them outside.
- Do not wash your clothes until they have been tested for mercury.



A Note about Pets

If you think your pet may have touched the mercury, put them outdoors or in a garage, weather permitting.

- Carry your pet through the house, if possible.
- If you cannot put your pet outside, shut them in a bathroom or another room that does not have carpet, away from the mercury spill.



- If possible, open a window or turn on an exhaust fan in the room.
- Leave them there until you are able to clean them, so they don't track mercury through your home.
- Read "Mercury Spills & Your Pet" for more information.

Step 3: Open all windows and doors to the outdoors in the room where the mercury spilled.

- If you have a fan, point it out the window so that it is blowing air from the room to the outdoors.



Step 4: Close all air returns, vents, and registers in the room.

- If you can't close the returns, vents, and registers, cover them completely with plastic, taping around the edges.

Step 5: Cover the spill area with plastic.



- If possible, cover the spill area and the floor around it with plastic – garbage bags or painter’s plastic work well.
- Tape the plastic down to prevent additional mercury vapor from going into the room.

Step 6: Close all doors in the room where the mercury spilled that go to the rest of the house.

- Close any doors in the room that exit to the rest of the house. Stuff rolled-up old towels or rags in the gap at the bottom of the doors.
- If you can’t close off the room, avoid the area where the mercury was spilled. Windows should be opened in the rest of the home for fresh air.

Step 7: Call your health department.

- Call your local health department or MDCH (**1-800-648-6942**) for cleanup advice and to have your home tested for mercury.
- After 5pm or on the weekend, call the non-emergency phone number for your local fire department. Do not call 911 to report a mercury spill.
- The Poison Control Center (1-800-222-1222) is also available to help answer questions about mercury spills, 24 hours per day / 7 days a week.



Find a Recycling Site Near You

Many Clean Sweep sites and community household hazardous waste collection centers accept mercury-containing items from the public at no charge. To find a collection site near you, visit www.michigan.gov/deqmercury, www.michigan.gov/cleansweep, www.Earth911.org, or www.michiganenergyoptions.org.

-  Recycling sites are not able to take cleanup debris. To find out how to dispose of cleanup debris, call the Environmental Assistance hotline at **1-800-662-9278**.

Want to learn more?

Contact the Michigan Department of Community Health at **1-800-648-6942** or visit www.michigan.gov/mercury for these other fact sheets:

- **How to Clean Up Spilled Mercury**
- **Mercury Spills - Hiring a Cleanup Contractor**
- **Mercury & Your Family’s Health**
- **Mercury Spills & Your Pet**
- **Is Your Home Mercury Free?**
- **Get Rid of Mercury Safely**

