

- **Raw materials-** Ask for a certificate of analysis from your supplier. If your raw materials include chlorine, sodium hydroxide or sulfuric acid, check with your supplier to make sure they are mercury free. Products generated using the mercury cell process or through lead or copper smelting contain 10 to 10,000 times the amount of mercury as those produced using other methods.



- Many **stains, preservatives and laboratory reagents** used in the home or business contain mercury. Look for substitutes for mercurochrome, mercuric oxide, thimerosal, gram iodine stains,



mercuric chloride, phenyl mercuric acetate, zenkers solution, histological fixatives and mercuric sulfide.

Non-mercury substitutes are available for most of these.

Always handle products containing mercury with care.

For further information on mercury, check out these websites:

<http://maine.gov/dep/mercury/>



Most transfer stations provide for the collection of fluorescent lamps and mercury containing devices. Ask your town office or transfer station attendant.

PREVENT POLLUTION

REDUCE MERCURY AT THE SOURCE

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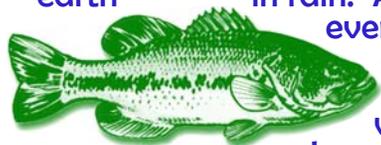


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Why Should You Be Concerned About Mercury?

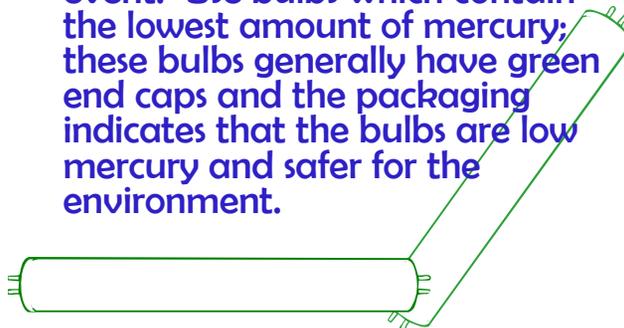
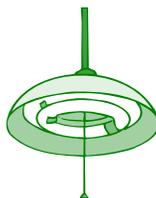
- Mercury is a naturally occurring element, the only metal that is a liquid at room temperature and pressure.
- Mercury has many useful properties and has been used extensively in thermostats and other switches, thermometers, fluorescent light bulbs, dental fillings and as a preservative.
- Mercury is an incidental component of coal and other fuels. Chlorine and sodium hydroxide manufactured with the mercury cell process and sulfuric acid produced during metal smelting also contain mercury.
- When elemental mercury, the silvery liquid seen in thermometers, is exposed to the environment, or when products containing mercury are incinerated, it becomes a gas and goes into the atmosphere. Eventually, it falls back to the earth in rain. At each rain event, mercury enters surface waters where fish and other wildlife take it up and accumulate it in their bodies.
- Mercury is a neuro-toxin. Eating fish with high mercury levels can lead to neurological problems, especially for unborn and young children.



Pollution Prevention Tips



- Fluorescent light bulbs** contain mercury. Manufacturers have reduced the amount of mercury in each bulb; however, they should be carefully stored and recycled. Fluorescent bulbs should remain intact for recycling. Take fluorescent bulbs to a local bulb recycling program or special recycling event. Use bulbs which contain the lowest amount of mercury; these bulbs generally have green end caps and the packaging indicates that the bulbs are low mercury and safer for the environment.



- Thermostats, tilt switches, manometers**, etc., contain mercury. While these products are generally safe in use, they should be recycled through appropriate programs when taken out of service.



- Dental amalgams** contain mercury which can enter the sewer system during filling placement and removal. Ask your dentist if the sinks are equipped with filtering and recycling systems and let him/her know this is important to you. Ask your dentist if a non-mercury filling is available and appropriate for your application.



- Mercury thermometers** are easily broken if dropped during use and require careful clean-up. Mercury from a broken thermometer should not be flushed down the drain or thrown in the solid waste. Ventilate the affected area as breathing mercury vapors is a hazard; do not use a vacuum for clean-up. Place all the mercury, broken glass and clean-up materials in a zip-lock bag. These materials should be recycled through a local mercury recycling program or your hazardous waste contractor. Homeowners can recycle through a household hazardous waste collection event. Digital thermometers are a handy substitute.

