

Do you work with any of these items that may contain mercury? Are they in your home?

- Fluorescent lamps
- Mercury switches
- Mercury vapor lamps
- Thermostat probes
- Metal halide lamps
- Relays
- High-pressure sodium lamps
- Thermometers
- Dental amalgam
- Gauges
- Laboratory solutions



If you do, be careful to keep them out of the trash or drain when they reach the end of their useful lives. When products containing mercury are placed in the trash, the mercury doesn't disappear. If the devices break, the mercury will find its way into the environment — and it won't go away.

A liquid metal in its elemental form, mercury is a nerve toxin that can impair the way we see, hear, walk and talk. Mercury released from broken devices can vaporize and reach the atmosphere. From there, mercury can mix with rain and snow and fall into lakes and waterways where it can mix with bacteria and be converted to methyl mercury. Methyl mercury contaminates the food chain and builds up in the tissue of fish and of wildlife and humans who eat the fish. Because of high mercury concentrations in the fish, many states issue advisories cautioning people to limit how much fish they eat.

About two-thirds of the mercury in the atmosphere comes from human-made sources like fossil fuel-burning power plants. The remaining mercury comes from natural sources, such as volcanoes and forest fires.

Imagine that a gram of mercury enters a 20-acre lake. This small amount of mercury in lake water may contaminate the fish, making them unfit to eat. A gram of mercury is only a small drop. A teaspoonful of mercury weighs about 70 grams. By comparison, a thermostat contains about 3 grams of mercury. A mercury switch may contain about 3.5 grams of mercury. One hundred fluorescent tubes can contain as much as 4 grams of mercury. An adult fish can have a mercury concentration 150,000 times as high as the water surrounding it. This situation results in fish consumption advisories.



Minimizing mercury releases from all sources is important. If we want to continue eating the fish we catch and seeing the fish-eating wildlife (e.g., loons, eagles and osprey), we need to protect our environment from releases of mercury. It takes all of us to manage mercury wastes properly and to keep mercury out of the environment. Local, state and national governments are working in partnership with businesses to develop collection systems for these wastes.

This brochure is designed to help you identify products and devices that may contain mercury. Select the information that pertains to your home or business from the fact cards inside this brochure.

For more comprehensive information on managing mercury-containing devices, contact the Florida Department of Environmental Protection at (800) 741-FDEP (4337) or visit the department's Web site at <http://dep.state.fl.us/waste>

You can also find your local recycling center for household hazardous waste at this website: www.cleanup.org



**Stop The
Mercury
From Rising**