



Office of Environmental Assistance

Mercury Recycling Michigan Options

Mercury (Hg) is a serious pollutant of concern. When spilled or disposed of improperly, mercury is released into the air or collected in bodies of water where it can contaminate fish caught and ingested by area children and families. Since 1988, the Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH) has issued a state-wide fish consumption advisory due to mercury contamination for all of the state's 11,000 lakes. See the MDCH mercury Web site, www.michigan.gov/mercury for more information on the health effects of mercury or how to report and clean up a spill.

Recycling even small amounts of mercury can have an impact in protecting our environment and health. There are several collection programs available.

LOCAL MERCURY COLLECTION SITES:

These sites accept most mercury containing items, but **none** of them accept debris from mercury spill clean-ups. Before moving any mercury item, call the location or program and confirm the following: Do they accept mercury items? What amounts are accepted? Do they have packaging requirements?

Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) collections

Refer to the map of these sites, <http://www.michigan.gov/wasterecycling>, to find your local program. Most sites accept mercury from farms, schools, and local governmental units. Some sites accept mercury from small businesses, but some do not. Please call to confirm what is accepted.

RECYCLING CFLs, Auto Switches and Thermostats:

Compact Fluorescent Lamps (CFLs)

There are several options identified for residential recycling of CFLs. If you are a small business, please check with your local recycling facility for available options.

1. Local retail stores – Several local retail stores accept and recycle CFLs. These include: ACE Hardware, Batteries Plus, Home Depot, Lowes, TrueValue Hardware, and others.
2. HHW collections – Some local mercury collections accept CFLs. These are listed at: www.michigan.gov/degre recyclingcontacts.
3. Utilities – Check your local utility company for a CFL recycling program.
4. Mail in programs – There are several CFL mail-in recycling programs. These are not free. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) provides a list www.epa.gov/cfl/cflrecycling.html of these programs.

Switches - Automotive

In 2006, the automotive manufacturers created the “End of Life Solutions” Corporation (ELVS) that recycles auto switches. Information on how to identify which vehicles contain mercury switches is available at: www.elvsolutions.org. Select “Educational Materials” tab at the top. Recyclers register and order their first recycling buckets through ELVS. Collected switches are recycled through the Environmental Quality Company (EQ), the program contractor. Information on EQ is available at: <https://www.usecology.com/Services/Environmental-Services/Recycling/ELVS-Mercury-Switch-Program.aspx>. About ten days before mailing buckets of switches for recycling, collection sites should request a free replacement bucket, from: elvsbuckets@usecology.com to continue collections.

Thermostats

The Thermostat Recycling Corporation (TRC) currently supports a statewide thermostat recycling program. Information on thermostat recycling is available on the TRC Web site: www.thermostat-recycle.org/statelaws/michigan/. Under this program, Michigan HVAC contractors, distributors and other companies, or local recycling groups, can seek out information on the proper handling and disposal of mercury containing thermostats.

MERCURY RECYCLERS – COMMERCIAL SITES and MAIL-IN PROGRAMS

The following facilities accept mercury for recycling, but there is typically a charge. Many provide a prepaid recycling pack that can be mailed. Do not take, mail, or ship any mercury items to these facilities without getting their permission first. Mercury is considered a hazardous material and must be handled carefully. Please note that this list may not be all inclusive and does not imply any endorsement by any governmental agency or unit.

Michigan Facilities:

This list is not all inclusive. Licensed hazardous waste haulers may be able to assist as well.

Arch Environmental Group
www.archenvgroup.com
 248-426-0165

US Ecology
www.usecology.com/Home.aspx
 800-592-5489

Drug & Lab Disposal
www.dld-inc.com
 800-685-9824

SQS – Environmental Recycling Group
ergenvironmental.com/
 734-459-3800

WASTE DISPOSAL LAWS

Recycling of mercury containing devices is strongly encouraged. CFLs from households can be placed into the trash if no recycling option is available. CFLs placed in the trash, should be bagged to avoid the release of mercury if broken and avoid injuring those handling the trash. Generally the best option for businesses, governments, and institutions with mercury containing waste is to manage it under the streamlined universal waste standards for handling common hazardous waste types. Further information is available in the DEQ [Universal Waste Guidance](#) publication.

If you need additional help recycling mercury, call the **Environmental Assistance Center** at **800-662-9278**, or E-mail deq-ead-envassist@michigan.gov for a referral.

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