

Mercury spill cleanup.

When mercury is spilled, it evaporates and gives off hazardous vapors that are invisible and odorless. If you spill mercury or break a product that contains mercury, it is important that it be cleaned up immediately.

Take immediate precautions.

Do not touch the mercury. Keep people and pets out of the area. To reduce evaporation, lower the room temperature. Open windows to ventilate the area. Remove all jewelry from your hands since mercury bonds with most metals and put on rubber gloves.

Large spills.

Large mercury spills should be cleaned up professionally. If more than one pound (about two tablespoons) has been spilled, you are required to report the spill to the Department of Environmental Protection. Call 1-888-304-1133 immediately.

Contain the spill.

Spilled mercury can spread quickly. Move furniture and other objects away from the spill and prevent the mercury from flowing into drains, cracks or crevices. Any remaining mercury will continue to emit dangerous vapors so it is important to contain every drop.

Never vacuum or sweep up the spilled mercury.

Vacuuming or sweeping up a mercury spill will spread the mercury throughout the house and contaminate your vacuum or broom.

Clean the spill.

Follow the cleanup procedure appropriate for the spill area.

On a hard surface, push the beads of mercury together with a stiff piece of paper or cardboard. Lift the beads with the cardboard and place into a plastic container. Pick up any remaining mercury with duct or packing tape or an eyedropper and place in the container along with the pieces of the broken item, the cardboard and gloves. Close the container and seal it with tape.

On carpet, cut out the contaminated section. Place it in a plastic bag. Place any pieces of the broken item in a plastic container along with your gloves. Close the container and seal it and the bag with tape.

In a drain, remove the sink trap and pour the contents into a plastic container. Close the container and seal it with tape.

Dispose of the mercury waste responsibly.

Label the containers used to collect the spilled material as mercury waste and store away from children. Never put the mercury waste in the trash! Many communities accept mercury waste at hazardous waste centers or collection events. Call your town or 1-866-9MERCURY for details.

Stop mercury from rising.

Brought to you by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs and Department of Environmental Protection.

1-866-9MERCURY

1-866-963-7287