

# Mercury Containing Products

## Safe Handling & Disposal Fact Sheet

Fluorescent Lighting Products, Thermostats, Thermometers, Switches,  
and Other Mercury Containing Items



### Benefits

Mercury is currently an essential component of fluorescent lighting products and is what allows the bulb to be an efficient source of light. The mercury is sealed within the glass tubing of the bulb and is not released when the bulb is intact. In the case of thermostats, thermometers and switches, mercury poses an unnecessary hazard and can be easily replaced with electronic alternatives.

### Health Risks

Mercury (Hg) is also a nerve toxin that affects the brain, spinal cord, kidneys, and liver and can impair the way we see, hear, walk, talk, and behave. Broken devices can vaporize, contaminate the air in our homes, and sometimes go down the drain or end up in the atmosphere where it can end up in the fish we consume in the form of methyl mercury.

### Don't

Throw away mercury containing lamps, bulbs, or other devices into the trash.

### Do

Take your mercury containing lamps, bulbs, switches, thermometers, thermostats, or any other mercury containing item to the:

**Household Hazardous Waste Collection Center** (Free for residents)  
2500 Michigan Ave., Santa Monica, CA 90404  
**Hours:** Wednesday to Friday - 7 am to 1 pm  
Saturday - 7 am to 1 pm  
**Limits:** 15 gallons or 125 pounds per visit  
**Direct Phone:** (310) 458-8255  
**Main Office:** (310) 458-2213  
**Website:** [www.smepd.org/hhw](http://www.smepd.org/hhw)

*"Only 2% of CFLs are recycled in the U.S. Most of the 98% of CFLs that are discarded get smashed en route to landfills and incinerators in packer trucks, releasing mercury vapors that are inhaled by trash collectors and escape into the air to settle out and be washed into our streams and rivers."*

*California Product Stewardship Council, CPSC*

### In Case of an Emergency

If contact with mercury occurs, call the California Poison Control Center at (800) 876-4766. If you spill more than what is contained in a single thermometer, you should get professional help in cleanup.



Environmental Programs Division  
200 Santa Monica Pier  
Santa Monica CA 90401  
[www.smepd.org](http://www.smepd.org)  
310.458-2213

# SMALL LAMP TYPES

**RECYCLE**

## CFL, Compact Fluorescent Lamps



## HID, High Intensity Discharge



CFLs contain mercury. If they screw into regular light sockets, they always have a plastic transformer.

HIDs have a small tube and contain mercury.

**TRASH**

## Incandescent



## Halogen

