

## Mercury Spill Containment and Assessment

### ***FIRST – Contain the spill.***

1. **STOP** traffic through the spill area to prevent tracking and spreading the mercury.
2. Consider **COVERING** the spill area with plastic sheeting or other vapor barrier to minimize the amount of mercury that can evaporate.
3. **VENTILATE** the spill area directly to outdoors if possible, (but NOT to other parts of the building).
4. **DO NOT USE A VACUUM OR A BROOM.**
5. **DO NOT** walk around in shoes or clothes that may have come into contact with the mercury.
6. **ESTIMATE** how much mercury spilled and where mercury has spread. The following table provides estimated amounts of mercury for some common devices.

### **Mercury Containing Devices**

<b>Mercury Containing Device</b>	<b>Typical Amount of Mercury in Device*</b>
Barometer	400-600 grams (0.9-1.3 pounds) <sup>†</sup>
Gas regulator (home)	100-400 grams (0.2-0.9 pounds)
Sphygmomanometers (blood-pressure cuffs)	100-125 grams (0.2-0.3 pounds)
Lab thermometer	3 grams (0.007 pounds)
Thermostat (home)	3 grams (0.007 pounds)
Fever thermometer	0.5 grams (0.001 pounds)
Fluorescent Lamps (manufactured after 2001)	0.0045 grams (0.000009 pounds)

\* Mercury spills must be reported to NYSDEC and the National Response Center if the amount is greater than 1 pound.

<sup>†</sup> The amount of mercury in a barometer should be considered a reportable amount.

***NYSDEC Spills Hotline – 800-457-7362***

***National Response Center – 800-424-8802***

### ***SECOND – Assess whether the spill should be cleaned up by a professional.***

**A trained professional, such as a hazardous waste contractor, should clean up the mercury spill if one or more of the following criteria are met:**

- the amount of mercury is greater than from a typical thermometer or thermostat,
- the mercury has been spread or tracked beyond one distinct, contained area,
- mercury is on porous materials or fabrics that cannot be sealed inside a plastic bag,

- the spill area cannot be adequately ventilated to outdoors, and exposure to the mercury vapor levels may present a potential health risk,
- there is a public perception that “professional cleaning” is required, e.g. most typically in schools or daycares

***NYSDOH and NYSDEC recommend that a trained professional, such as a hazardous waste contractor, perform the cleanup whenever the amount of mercury spilled is greater than from a typical thermometer or thermostat i.e. amounts greater than about 3 grams of mercury.***

**A mercury spill that may be cleaned up without a professional:**

- involves small amounts of mercury, typically from thermometers or thermostats,
- is on hard, impermeable surfaces where none of the mercury can escape into inaccessible areas, cracks, or porous fabrics,
- is in a well-ventilated area where mercury vapors can be exhausted to outdoors without spreading the vapors into other indoor spaces,
- can be cleaned following the procedures described in the enclosed fact sheet (See “**Cleaning Up a Small Mercury Spill**”)

*To Contact a Trained Professional*

Listings may be found in the Yellow Pages under “Hazardous Waste” or “Engineers – Environmental” or “Environmental Services” or a list of Hazardous Waste Contractors may be available from NYSDEC.

**Notifications**

NYSDOH After-hours Duty Officer	866-881-2809
NYSDOH Environmental Health	800-458-1158
<b>NYSDEC Spills Hotline*</b>	<b>800-457-7362</b>
<b>EPA/Coast Guard – National Response Center*</b>	<b>800-424-8802</b>

**\* These agencies must be notified whenever more than one (1) pound of mercury is spilled.**