



### **MERCURY AND STORMWATER**

Mercury, when disposed improperly is washed off by stormwater into our lakes and streams. When mercury is deposited in lakes or waterways, bacteria convert it to methylmercury. Methylmercury contaminates the food chain and builds up in the tissue of fish and wildlife and humans who eat the fish.

### **USE CAUTION AROUND MERCURY**

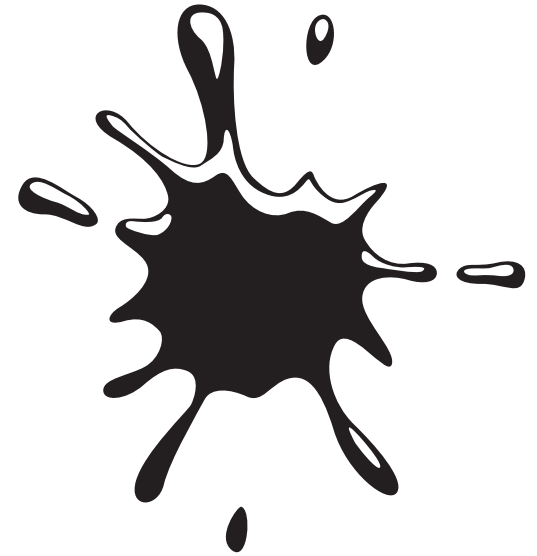
- Never break open products that contain mercury.
- Do not pour mercury down the drain.
- Never burn mercury-containing products.
- Do not put mercury-containing products in the trash.
- Always properly recycle mercury-containing products at a household hazardous waste collection.

Learn more about New Canaan's Stormwater Management Program

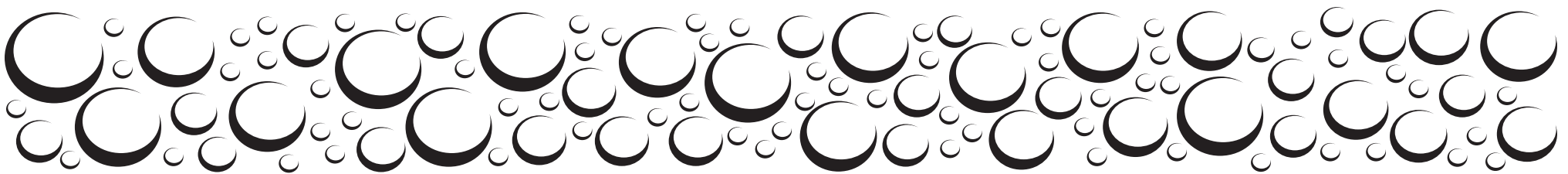


Town of New Canaan, Connecticut  
Department of Public Works  
77 Main Street  
New Canaan, CT 06840

## **KEEPING THE Hg OUT OF OUR H<sub>2</sub>O**



**A GUIDE TO PREVENTING MERCURY  
POLLUTION IN OUR WATER**





### MERCURY AND HOW IT GETS INTO THE ENVIRONMENT

Mercury (Chemical Symbol Hg) is a silver colored liquid metal that has many industrial applications. Mercury is also toxic, and becomes dangerous when it comes in contact with the air and vaporizes.

### WHY IS MERCURY A HEALTH PROBLEM?

- You can't see or smell mercury vapor from a spill, but it can still poison you.
- Children under the age of 6 and women who are pregnant or planning to get pregnant are most at risk to the health effects of mercury exposure.
- Eating fish contaminated by mercury can be dangerous to your health.
- Short-term high levels of exposure can cause headaches, lung damage, nausea, vomiting, skin rashes, diarrhea, increases in blood pressure and heart rate.
- Long-term high levels of exposure can lead to permanent damage to the brain, kidneys, and developing fetus.

### HOUSEHOLD ITEMS THAT MAY CONTAIN MERCURY

Thermometers - *typically contain about ½ gram of this silver colored liquid (non-mercury alternatives are available).*

Thermostats - *inside the sealed glass "tilt switch" (not the newer electronic kind).*

Gauges - *barometers, manometers, blood pressure and vacuum gauges ONLY with silver colored liquid*

Electrical switches and relays - *typically contain about 3.5 grams of mercury in SOME chest freezers, pre-1972 washing machines, sump pumps, electric space heaters, clothes irons, silent light switches and automatic car hood & trunk lights.*

Some athletic shoes (made before 1997 ONLY) *with flashing lights in soles.*

Vintage toys & games - *toy drawing screens and mercury maze games.*

Fluorescent bulbs and other mercury vapor lighting - *HID (high intensity discharge), metal halide, high pressure sodium and neon bulbs.*

These items may be accepted at the Town's Household Hazardous Waste Collection Day.

KEEPING THE Hg OUT OF OUR H<sub>2</sub>O

In 2013, mercury thermostat collection legislation was passed in Connecticut requiring thermostat manufacturers to establish collection programs for contractor and consumer-generated mercury thermostats. The legislation also requires all HVAC wholesale distributors with facilities in Connecticut to act as a collection point for waste mercury thermostats.

IT IS ILLEGAL TO DISPOSE MERCURY THERMOSTATS IN SOLID WASTE IN CONNECTICUT. HVAC CONTRACTORS MUST RECYCLE ALL MERCURY THERMOSTATS THEY REMOVE FROM SERVICE. IT IS ILLEGAL TO LEAVE THEM AT THE CUSTOMER'S PREMISE. TRC IS THE EASIEST AND CHEAPEST WAY TO COMPLY WITH CONNECTICUT LAW.

Bring your mercury-containing thermostat to any authorized collection location for proper disposal. To locate a collection point, please use the search tool on the website:

<http://thermostat-recycle.org>.

