

Mercury Reduction Program

Marathon County Health Department

715-261-1900

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www.MarathonCountyHealthDepartment.org



*Protecting
our
public health
and
environment
through
mercury
education
and
collection
programs.*

Hunt Your Home and Workplace for Mercury

Many of the items that used to be manufactured with mercury have been removed from production and can no longer be purchased. However, we may still be using items at home and work that contain mercury and we need to be reminded to properly handle and dispose of those items.

Mercury is considered a health hazard that can cause damage to the spinal cord, brain, kidneys, and liver. Young children and pregnant women are especially at risk for health problems related to mercury exposures.

Product	Description	What To Do	Mercury-Free Alternative
Thermometers	Silver liquid in tube	Bring to a thermometer exchange location for a free digital thermometer.	Alcohol or digital thermometer
Thermostats	All non-electronic models	When it needs replacing, take to the Marathon County Solid Waste Dept for safe environmental management.	Electronic "set back" models can help save on energy bills.
Fluorescent lights	Light bulbs in the form of long or curved tubes	Continue to use but take to the Marathon County Solid Waste Dept for safe environmental management.	None, although some newer bulbs have less mercury than others.
Old Alkaline Batteries	Bought before 1990. Check expiration date	Acceptable to dispose of them in the trash.	Rechargeable batteries
Mercurochrome	An old time antiseptic for cuts and scrapes	Take to the Marathon County Solid Waste Dept for safe environmental management.	New antiseptics do not contain mercury.
Maze Toys	Contain blob of mercury.	Take to the Marathon County Solid Waste Dept for safe environmental management.	Mercury-free games
Shoes that Light Up or Make Noise	Bought between 1991 and 1994	Take to the Marathon County Solid Waste Dept for safe environmental management.	Sneakers that don't light up
Chemistry Sets	May contain mercury compounds	Take to the Marathon County Solid Waste Dept for safe environmental management.	Other mercury-free toys
Vials or Jars of Mercury, Sometimes on Necklaces	Small containers of mercury used for ceremonial purposes. May be found in basements or garages	Take to the Marathon County Solid Waste Dept for safe environmental management.	None

Residents may take items containing mercury to the Marathon County Solid Waste Department for safe environmental management, by appointment only, and most have no fee. Call ahead to schedule an appointment (715) 446-3101 x100. Businesses must also call ahead to get a disposal fee estimate and to schedule an appointment.

Ever wonder how the **Mad Hatter** in Alice in Wonderland got his name?

In the 1800s, hat makers started using a form of mercury to help make the wood in hats feel softer. Since they didn't know mercury was dangerous, many hat makers were poisoned. When brain damage from mercury poisoning made them act strangely, people started using the phrase "mad as a hatter" to mean a crazy person.

Why Should You Be Concerned About Mercury?

Did you know...

- one fever thermometer contains about ½ gram of mercury, enough to contaminate a 10-acre lake?
- about 15% of the world's gold is produced by artisanal and small-scale miners, most of whom use mercury to extract it from the earth?
- a home thermostat contains approximately 3 grams of mercury?
- every waterway in Wisconsin has been issued a fish consumption advisory due to mercury contamination? [Choose Wisely: A Health Guide for Eating Fish in Wisconsin \[PDF\]](#) is available online.
- mercury is a neurotoxin that affects the part of the brain that helps coordinate your movements? Mercury may also harm the kidneys and other organs, but the neurological damage is irreversible.

Transporting Mercury

To transport your thermometers or mercury products for recycling, please double bag them using zip-lock bags or contain them in a sealed plastic container. Please cushion items to reduce risk of breakage.



Mercury Thermometer Exchange Sites

Mercury thermometers can be exchanged for a digital thermometer at the following locations. (Limit of 1 per customer)

Marathon County Health Dept (715)261-1900
Wausau Fire Dept (715)261-7900
Rothschild Municipal Center (715)359-3660
Rib Mountain Fire Dept (715)355-6763
Schofield Municipal Center (715)359-5230
Kronenwetter Municipal Center (715)693-4200
Mosinee City Hall (715)693-2275

For questions contact:
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