



## Keep Your Family and Water Safe from Mercury-

*Recycle fluorescent tubes and compact fluorescent light bulbs at your local household hazardous waste facility and participating drop-off sites.*



### Fluorescent lamps save energy!!

Compared to standard incandescent lamps, fluorescent lamps can reduce energy consumption by 50% and lighting costs by 30-38%. Fluorescent lamps last, on an average, 10 times longer than conventional lamps.

### Fluorescent lamps contain mercury, so dispose of them correctly.



Improper lamp *disposal* is a human health and water pollution problem, because lamps broken in landfills or at home release mercury - a potent neurotoxin. Dispose of used fluorescent lamps at your local household hazardous waste collection centers. These centers send fluorescent lamps to specialized recycling facilities where the mercury in them is recovered for reuse, rather than escaping into the environment and polluting our water.

### Where to take used fluorescent lamps:

#### Household Hazardous Waste events: (bring fluorescent lamps and other hazardous waste):

➤ **Santa Clara County** residents (not including Palo Alto residents) can dispose of their used fluorescent lamps at facilities operated by Santa Clara County's Household Hazardous Waste Collection Program. For more information call (408) 299-7300 or visit [www.hhw.org](http://www.hhw.org)



➤ **Palo Alto** residents can take their used fluorescent lamps to monthly household hazardous waste events at the Regional Water Quality Control Plant. For more information call (650) 496-6980 or visit [http://www.cityofpaloalto.org/depts/pwd/waste\\_program.asp](http://www.cityofpaloalto.org/depts/pwd/waste_program.asp)

### Daily drop-off options:

➤ **Sunnyvale, Mountain View and Palo Alto** residents can dispose of their used fluorescent lamps at the SMaRT station. To find out more call Green Team/ SMaRT station at 408-730-7262 or visit <http://sunnyvale.ca.gov/Departments/PublicWorks/GarbageRecyclingandWasteReduction/SMaRTStation.aspx>

### Quick Facts

- Mercury is a potent nerve toxin and can affect the brain and nervous systems. Pregnant women and young children are most susceptible to mercury poisoning. It can also affect fetal development, causing birth defects.
- Mercury released into the environment is transported by air, rain, snow or runoff and deposited in our creeks and Bay. Bacteria convert it into a form that is easily absorbed by microscopic animals and plants, which in turn are consumed by larger animals. You can get exposed to mercury by consuming mercury-contaminated fish.
- Each year, broken, landfilled fluorescent lamps in the Bay Area release enough mercury vapors to contaminate a water body almost as big as Lake Tahoe.
- The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has issued a nationwide consumer advisory that children and nursing mothers should not eat shark, swordfish, king mackerel, or ocean whitefish because of mercury contamination.

- **Mountain View, Palo Alto, East Palo Alto, Los Altos, Los Altos Hills and Stanford** residents can dispose of used fluorescent lamps at participating hardware stores. To find out more about this program call (650)-329-2598 or visit <http://www.cityofpaloalto.org/depts/pwd/news/details.asp?NewsID=352&TargetID=181>

## How else can you help reduce mercury pollution?



**Buy low-mercury fluorescent lamps** - Major lighting manufacturers now produce lamps with up to 80% less mercury than standard fluorescent lamps.

- Philips “Alto”
- GE “Ecolux”
- Sylvania “Ecologic”

However, since none of these lamps are completely mercury-free, they should also be disposed of at local household hazardous waste collection centers.



**Replace mercury fever thermometers with non-mercury digital or glass gallium-indium-tin (galinstan) thermometers** -

The standards of accuracy for non-mercury thermometers are the same as those for mercury thermometers.



**Recycle mercury containing thermometers, thermostats, and batteries** -

Because mercury is a good conductor of electricity and is the only metal that is liquid at room temperature, it is used in household products like thermometers, thermostats, and batteries. All of these are accepted at local household hazardous waste collection centers and should be turned in there.

## What should you do if a mercury-containing product breaks in your home?

If you spill mercury in your home, turn off the heating or air conditioning and ventilate the room to the outdoors. Avoid touching the mercury with your bare hands and do not vacuum the spill. Using a medicine dropper, collect the mercury and place the mercury and the dropper in an airtight container. Take the mercury to your local household hazardous waste facility or collection event.

### For more information on mercury visit:

- The US EPA’s website at <http://www.epa.gov/mercury>
- Find information on non-mercury alternatives to consumer products at [http://www.michigan.gov/deq/0,1607,7-135-3307\\_29693\\_4175-11695--,00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/deq/0,1607,7-135-3307_29693_4175-11695--,00.html)
- The NEWMOA website at <http://www.newmoa.org/prevention/mercury>

- Due to the San Francisco Bay mercury contamination, it is recommended that adults eat no more than two servings of fish from the Bay per month.
- Five of California's largest grocery retailers have begun displaying signs cautioning consumers about the dangers of mercury in fish. The signs, hung near fish counters, advise women and children to not eat swordfish and shark, and to limit consumption of fresh tuna.
- Mercury harms aquatic life too. Information from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service indicates that mercury in sediment may cause increased mortality and deformities of rainbow trout embryos.



*Brought to you by the Santa Clara Valley Urban Runoff Pollution Prevention Program, a coalition of local government agencies.*