

Department of Natural Resources sponsoring mercury drop off sites in Kansas City, northwest Missouri

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JEFFERSON CITY, MO, JUNE 18, 2010 -- The Missouri Department of Natural Resources is launching a summer-long effort Monday to rid homes of mercury, with nearly 50 mercury drop-off locations throughout the state, including 11 in the Kansas City and northwest Missouri area.

The department is working with fire departments and county health offices to provide drop-off buckets in communities statewide. Private citizens or nonprofit agencies can visit these sites and leave mercury-containing instruments, like thermometers, blood pressure cuffs, thermostats, or switches.

The department is asking that anyone seeking to dispose of items at these sites prepare the items for drop off by first securing the item in two zip-top bags and then place it in a sealed container such as a coffee can or plastic margarine tub. The extra packaging is required to prevent the release of mercury if the item breaks while being transported.

The program, however, does not include compact fluorescent bulbs. A fact sheet detailing the proper disposal of bulbs is available on the department's website at dnr.mo.gov/pubs/pub2273.pdf.

The Department of Natural Resources will collect the dropped off items after the campaign ends on Oct. 22 and transport them to Jefferson City. A state contractor will then pick up the items and recycle what can be recycled and properly dispose of the remaining items.

Anyone who is uncomfortable with transporting mercury instruments, or who has large quantities of mercury, can contact the department's spill line at 573-634-2436 to arrange to have items picked up.

The list of drop off sites in the Kansas City area and northwest Missouri is included below. Please call the site before taking mercury instruments for disposal, and never leave items if the facility is closed. Unless otherwise noted, mercury drop-off hours are Monday through Friday:

- Harrisonville Fire Department, 903 S. Commercial, 816-380-8952, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. Call ahead on weekends.
- Belton Fire Department, 16300 N. Mullen Rd., 816-331-7969, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. daily.
- Belton Fire Department, 223 Main St., 816-331-7969, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. daily.
- Excelsior Springs Fire Department, 1120 Tracy, 816-630-3000, Daily 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.
- Clinton County Health Department, 106 Bush St., Plattsburg, 816-539-2144, 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
- Tri-County Health Department, 302 N Park, Stanberry, 660-783-2707, 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

- St. Joseph/Buchanan County Health Department, 904 S. 10th St., 816-271-4635, 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
- Maryville Department of Public Safety, 222 E. 3rd St., 660-560-3209, 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
- Kansas City Household Hazardous Waste Center, 4707 Deramus, 816-784-2082, Tues.-Sat. 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. or by appointment.
- Platte County Health Department, 1201 East St., Parkville, 816-858-2412. Call for hours.
- Platte County Health Department, 212 Marshall Road, Platte City, 816-858-2412.

Metallic mercury is liquid at room temperature and has no odor. It was once commonly used in thermometers, barometers, switches, and blood-pressure measuring devices.

When spilled, some of the metal will evaporate into the air and can be carried long distances. Mercury is toxic when inhaled. Improper clean up with a vacuum, paintbrush or household cleaner increases exposure by dispersing the mercury into the air.

For more information on the mercury roundup, contact the nearest participating agency or the department's Environmental Services Program at 573-634-2436. Additional information on mercury, including health effects and how to clean up a small mercury spill, is available on the department's website at <http://www.dnr.mo.gov/env/mercury.htm>.

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