



MADISON COUNTY
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RE: County to Collect Mercury Based Products on the First Saturday of each month

Madison County began collecting mercury based products on December 5th in response to a flurry of inquires and requests from the public and to comply with a directive from the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC).

As with all new collection programs sponsored by the Dept. of Solid Waste and Sanitation the mercury based product collection will begin as a pilot program at the Buyea Rd. Landfill (transfer station) in the Town of Lincoln. The next mercury collection is scheduled for Saturday, January 2 from 7:10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Residents will be able to dispose of mercury based products on the first Saturday of each month thereafter, which is in keeping with the regulations set forth by the DEC.

Mercury added products include but are not limited to fluorescent tubes and compact fluorescent bulbs (CFLs or spiral bulbs). When preparing bulbs for disposal, place tubes back in original sleeves or box or in the sleeve of the replacement tube (bulb). For a complete list of mercury based products visit the DEC website at www.dec.state.ny.us

The CFLs should be wrapped in one sheet of newspaper and then placed in the specially marked container at the Buyea Rd. transfer station. If there are questions concerning disposal ask the transfer station attendant or call the Solid Waste Hot Line at 1-800-721-2208.

It should be noted that disposal of mercury-added products is not allowed in the normal trash. Products containing mercury must be delivered to a household hazardous waste collection program. The new mercury collection pilot program being sponsored by Madison County meets DEC requirements for this material, explained Recycling Coordinator Sharon A. Driscoll.

She noted that one gram of mercury can pollute a 20-acre lake. Mercury still holds the number one ranking on the US Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) list of the 19 most persistent toxic metals targeted for control and eventual elimination.

For more information on this program call the Solid Waste Hotline at 1-800-721-2208.

Important facts about Mercury:

Why is Mercury a concern?

When mercury enters the waterway, it changes, (through natural chemical process) to methyl mercury, which is more toxic. Methyl mercury in the food chain builds up in the tissue of fish and animals. In humans, mercury is a neurotoxin, this means it slows fetal and child development and impairs brain function along with several other divesting affects.

Mercury is toxic in small amounts. Because mercury builds up in the food chain, even small amounts of mercury in water can make fish unsafe to eat and cause reproductive problems for wildlife. Mercury volatilizes at room temperature so even a small mercury spill indoors can make the air unsafe to breath.

Where is mercury in my home?

Most commonly mercury is found in the following products:

- Thermometers (fever, candy, fry indoor/outdoor and oven)
- Thermostats (non-electric))
- Older paints (before 1990)
- Fluorescent & CFLs) spiral lights
- Pilot light sensors in gas stoves, water heaters and dryers
- Barometers
- Clothes irons with automatic or tilt shutoff blood pressure cuffs

For a complete list of mercury based products visit the DEC website at www.dec.state.ny.us