

MERCURY FACTS

Mercury is used primarily in instruments such as thermometers and barometers, but it can also be used in arc lamps, boilers, coolant, cathodes for the production of chlorine and caustic soda, electrical components, mercury vapor lamps, metallurgy, mirror coatings, as a catalyst, and as an absorber in nuclear power plants.

■ Characteristics

Mercury is a silver-white, extremely heavy, odorless, mobile liquid metal. It evaporates very slowly; as a result, when spilled it will remain in place for a long time. Mercury vapor cannot be seen or smelled, and special equipment is required to detect it. Contact with fire will produce irritating, corrosive, and toxic gases.

■ Exposure

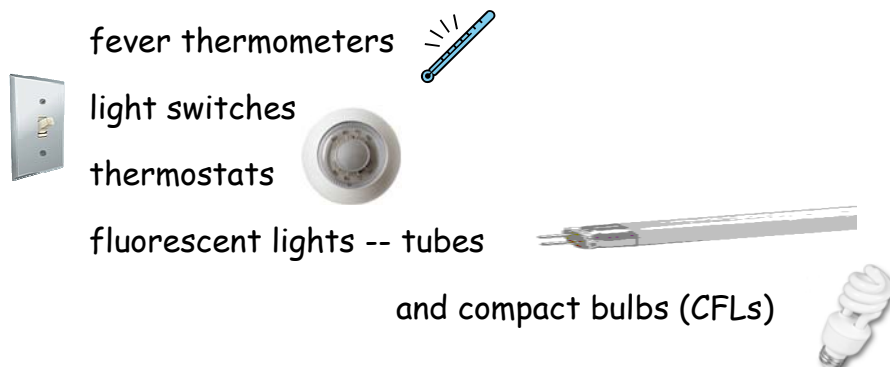
Mercury is highly toxic through skin absorption, inhalation of fumes, or by vapor being absorbed by the respiratory and intestinal tract. Mercury poisoning can cause damage to the nervous system, including the brain.

■ Symptoms

Acute exposure symptoms may range from metallic tastes, skin eruptions, trembling, muscle fatigue, nausea, abdominal pain, vomiting, diarrhea and/or headache. Chronic exposure may be deadly.

What Should I Do if I have Mercury or Mercury-Containing Devices at Home?

The El Paso County Household Hazardous Waste Facility, 3255 Akers Drive, accepts the following items that contain mercury:



For additional information, call 520-7878.