

MERCURY

Mercury is highly toxic and can cause severe health effects if inhaled, ingested, or absorbed through the skin. Due to its toxicity, mercury must be handled with extreme care, and any spills or releases should be addressed immediately. Proper disposal of mercury and mercury-containing devices is essential.



Elemental Mercury

Mercury removed from devices or ampules (e.g., mercury collected in a container) must be treated as hazardous waste. Collected elemental mercury should be packaged in a tightly sealed, leak-free container, such as a bottle or vial with a screw-top lid. When collecting metallic mercury, avoid mixing it with other chemicals or waste whenever possible. Label the container with the words "WASTE MERCURY" and include the date when the mercury was placed in the container.

Mercury Containing Devices

Devices and equipment that may contain elemental mercury include thermostats, mercury thermometers, switches (such as tilt, float, and fire suppression switches), sensors (such as flame sensors), relays (including displacement, wetted, and contact relays), manometers, and mercury-containing ampules removed from temperature control devices.

Place all waste mercury-containing devices in the original manufacturer's carton or in a box lined with a plastic bag to prevent breakage. Label the box with the words "WASTE MERCURY-CONTAINING EQUIPMENT" and include the date when the device was placed in the box.

Mercury Spills

Mercury spills, including broken thermometers, must be cleaned up immediately, with the spill debris disposed of as hazardous waste. If you experience a mercury spill, leave the room and call 9-911 to report the spill.

Laboratories using elemental mercury or mercury-containing devices must have mercury spill kits specifically designed for cleaning up such spills. **Never use a regular vacuum cleaner, as this will cause the mercury to vaporize and disperse into the air.** Follow all instructions provided with the mercury spill kit.

Place all mercury clean-up debris in a leakproof container or a sealed plastic bag. Label the container or bag with "MERCURY SPILL DEBRIS" and include the date the debris was generated.



To dispose of elemental mercury or mercury containing devices, submit an online pickup request using the EH&S Chemical/Bio Waste Pickup Request form available at: <https://csn.campusoptics.com/hw/chemical-bio-waste-pick-up-request-form>. Please contact EH&S at 702-651-7445 or ehs@csn.edu if you have any questions.