

Wastes That Are Hazardous Due to Mercury

Disposal of most mercury wastes in the regular trash or down the drain is illegal and unsafe. Learn how to properly manage and recycle mercury and items containing mercury. It's the law.

Hazardous Wastes Containing Mercury

In New York State, the following are examples of hazardous wastes when being disposed, due to mercury content, and are required to be properly managed:

- Elemental mercury, unused or product-like, intended for reclamation.¹
- Mercury containing compounds.
- Soil, debris, equipment, tools, etc. contaminated with mercury.
- Spill cleanup materials contaminated with mercury.

¹ Mercury in this form to be sent for reclamation generally is exempt from regulation as a waste.

Universal Wastes Containing Mercury

Universal Wastes are hazardous wastes meeting certain criteria which make them eligible for reduced, streamlined, regulatory requirements. In New York State, the following materials may be managed under the less stringent Universal Waste Rule^{2,3}:

- Batteries such as nickel-cadmium, small-sealed lead-acid, lead-acid, lithium ion and mercury-containing button type.
- Lamps such as fluorescent, mercury vapor, metal halide and high pressure sodium.

Universal Waste Mercury-Containing Equipment

- Mercury fever and laboratory thermometers
- Mercury thermostats
- Mercury gauges, manometers, barometers
- Mercury switches
- Mercury blood pressure units
- Mercury water flow meters and gas pressure regulators

² New York State's Universal Waste Rule can be found at 6NYCRR Subpart 374-3.

³ Mercury Containing Equipment is Universal Waste through CP#39. Refer to the NYSDEC website at www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/8514.html

Recycling/Disposing of Hazardous/Universal Waste

If your waste is from a household, contact your Solid Waste Authority and ask if a Household Hazardous Waste Collection Day is scheduled in your area, or call NYSDEC for Household Hazardous Waste information at 518-402-8706. All other generators of mercury wastes contact the NYSDEC Bureau of Hazardous Waste Regulation, at 518-402-8633 or 800-462-6553 for more information. Please visit the [NYSDEC website](#) for mercury management information and the Hazardous and Universal Waste Regulations.