

Elemental Mercury Spill Clean-up

Mercury Spill Kit

- **Isolate spill area:** caution tape, signage
- **Recovery, containment and absorption:** medicine dropper, mercury absorbing powder, treated sponges, water spray bottle
- **Personal protective equipment:** goggles, nitrile gloves, shoe cover, lab coat
- **Clean-up waste collection:** tweezers, small dust pan, index cards, small resealable bags, plastic bottles with lid
- **Verify complete clean-up:** flashlight, indicator powder
- **Elemental mercury spill clean-up procedure**

1. Alert supervisor and personnel in the immediate area. If possible, ask a co-worker to bring the spill kit.
2. Put on safety goggles, nitrile gloves and lab coat. If shoes are contaminated, put on shoe covers. Remove all metal jewelry.
3. Contain spill by spreading mercury absorbing powder outside spill area, working inwards. Alternatively, absorb with treated sponges. Spray water lightly over the spill area to avoid generating dust during clean-up.
4. Isolate spill area by delineating with caution tape and posting signage "Danger: Mercury spill"
5. If spill is from a broken thermometer, pick up glass pieces using a tweezer; collect broken glass in plastic container with lid.
6. Collect reacted mercury and powder by slowly sweeping mixture with index card into the plastic dustpan.
7. Look for any remaining mercury by shining flashlight on the spill surface. Any remaining beads will reflect light. Reapply absorbing powder as needed.
8. Verify that clean-up is complete by using mercury indicator powder with color change. Allow sufficient contact time (usually 24 hr) or as recommended by the manufacturer.
9. Collect mercury waste and all materials used in the clean-up in a plastic container. Label "mercury clean-up waste". Call EH&S at 77-5269 for waste pick-up.

NOTES:

- ❖ Spill volume larger than a thermometer must be carefully collected with a disposable medicine dropper.
- ❖ If spilled in water bath, let water cool off completely before clean-up. Scoop water off carefully avoiding mercury beads until water level allows mercury beads to be collected with a medicine dropper.
- ❖ Neutralization of spills in hard to reach spaces will need liquid mercury neutralizer.

DONTs

- ⊗ **Never** use a vacuum cleaner to clean up mercury.
- ⊗ **Never** use a broom to clean up mercury.
- ⊗ **Never** pour mercury down a drain.
- ⊗ **Never** wash clothing or other items that have come in direct contact with mercury in a washing machine.
- ⊗ **Never** walk around if your shoes might be contaminated with mercury.

