

Handling of Mercury Spills and CFL Bulbs February, 2014

Frequently we get questions about how to handle broken items containing mercury. These would be things like old thermometers with mercury or fluorescent bulbs (either old straight bulbs or the new compact fluorescent bulbs known as CFLs). Since mercury is a nerve toxin, it is important to properly clean up the breakage.

First, it should be pointed out that such spills do NOT usually mean a big cost. For small amounts you can do the clean up yourself. Rather than going through all the clean-up techniques here, we have added links where you can learn about mercury and also get some great tips on how to properly clean up broken bulbs and thermometers.

Also, be aware that all such mercury-containing items THAT ARE NOT BROKEN can be brought to the Guthrie County Transfer Station at NO CHARGE. Thermometers, thermostats, any type of fluorescent bulbs, etc. are taken for recycling at the facility at 2349 Jaguar Tr. Such materials are NOT taken with your curbside recycling.

The website contacts with really good clean-up information are as follows:

<http://www.iowapoisson.org> (Enter "mercury" in the Search box)

www.epa.gov/mercury/spills/index.htm

You may also call IA Dept. of Public Health (515-281-8707) or the IA Statewide Poison Control Center (800-222-1222).

Contact the Guthrie Co. Transfer Station (641-747-3764) for bringing mercury-containing items to our site. You must be a Guthrie Co. resident.