

Sample Proclamation

SOURCE: Draft Wisconsin Mercury Sourcebook

Your facility may wish to formally declare your commitment to mercury reduction. You may use the proclamation below, or adapt it to suit your needs.

WHEREAS mercury is an elemental substance, that once released into the environment, easily and rapidly changes forms to several organic and inorganic states that transfer from soil to air to water and back again;

WHEREAS the organic form of mercury, methylmercury, bioaccumulates in aquatic ecosystems to magnify concentrations in animal tissue in increasing degrees up to 250,000 times;

WHEREAS methylmercury, the most toxic form of mercury, can affect the reproductive efforts of top predators in aquatic environments such as loons, otters, mink, and panthers;

WHEREAS the neurotoxic effects of high levels of methylmercury poisoning in humans has been established, and low-level doses of methylmercury consumption can potentially effect human health, especially that of a fetus;

WHEREAS elemental mercury is a highly toxic substance which can vaporize easily and cause both acute and chronic health effects including severe respiratory irritation and damage to the central nervous system;

WHEREAS mercury has been identified internationally as a toxic substance of concern, and mercury contamination has led to fish consumption advisories for more than 235 lakes and 350 miles of rivers in Wisconsin;

WHEREAS the majority of mercury entering Wisconsin comes from anthropogenic sources, and one-quarter of these emissions are the result of the purposeful use of mercury;

WHEREAS mercury is used widely in consumer and industrial products, where, in most cases, alternative, mercury-free products are available;

WHEREAS pollution prevention or product substitution is a progressive approach to protecting the environment that eliminates or minimizes the generation of mercury-bearing waste, making it one of the most favorable strategies for maintaining a clean environment;

WHEREAS pollution prevention for mercury can help environmental conditions, as well as protect the health and safety of workers;

WHEREAS recognizing mercury minimization as an active opportunity to improve the environment of Wisconsin and the environment of our business, we, the undersigned, do hereby declare our business to be a mercury minimization participant;

WE commit to research the following mercury minimization opportunities in our facility and implement those we find most feasible:

Pollution Prevention

- Phase out mercury-containing medical products
- Substitute zinc air or silver oxide batteries for mercuric oxide (mercury-zinc) batteries
- Discontinue the practice of sending mercury thermometers home with new mothers
- Use safe, non-m cleaners and degreasers in labs, housekeeping departments, and maintenance areas
- Replace mercury-containing thermostats and switches with mercury-free alternatives when remodeling or replacing old equipment
- Purchase septic tank and sump pumps that contain magnetic dry reed switches, optic sensors, or mechanical switches instead of mercury tilt switches
- Examine use of other mercury-containing products in your facility and consider the alternatives for these: generators, high intensity lamps, manometers

Recycling

- Establish a battery collection program
- Recycle fluorescent lamps
- Recycle or dispose of mercury-containing products in an environmentally sound manner

Good Management Practices

- Label instruments containing m
- Familiarize workers with the laboratory’s policies on the proper disposal practices when working with mercury solutions in a laboratory
- Follow proper procedures when cleaning or refilling instruments that contain mercury.
- Start an intensive educational program to keep mercury-containing products (thermometers, batteries, etc.) out the medical waste red bags.
- Establish effective spill response measures to ensure the mercury already in your facility is handled in a safe and proper manner.

Facility

Name

Date Signed