

Onondaga County Directive

ADMINISTRATIVE DIRECTIVE MANUAL

SUBJECT: Mercury Containing Products

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SIGNED: *Jeanne M. Mahoney*
County Executive

DATE: 10-09-09

DIRECTIVE: Each and every department, board, agency, and commission of the County of Onondaga shall carry out a management hierarchy for mercury and mercury-containing products with the goal of reducing mercury discharges to the environment. The National Research Council has estimated that each year over 60,000 children may be born in the United States with permanent, irreversible neurological problems due to mercury exposure from the consumption of fish. The County's mercury management preferred option of first choice is pollution prevention, also referred to as source reduction. It is expected that this will be accomplished primarily through a reduction in the purchase and use of mercury-containing products through product substitution whenever practical.

For those mercury-containing products essential to fulfilling the County's mission and for which there are no practical or reasonable substitutes, the County's management hierarchy considers recycling to be the next best management option. The treatment or disposal of mercury-containing products should be considered only after source reduction and recycling have been determined to be impractical or unavailable.

PROCEDURE: In order to accomplish the above, each and every County department will investigate and identify potential, non-mercury alternatives before the need for replacement of presently used mercury-containing products arises. At the time of product replacement or when alternative products are available that can provide essentially comparable performance at a comparable price, substitute mercury-containing products and equipment with non-mercury alternatives. When discarding mercury-containing products and equipment, segregate these items for proper recycling and/or disposal.

To assist County departments in complying with the intent of this Directive, the County Office of Environment and the Department of Water Environment Protection will provide departments with information on the types of products and equipment known to contain mercury.

The County Division of Purchase will confirm that departments have investigated the availability of substitute, non-mercury alternatives before proceeding with the purchase of mercury-containing products and equipment. Assistance in the identification of reliable recycling and disposal alternatives when it becomes necessary to discard mercury-containing products will be made available.

In the event a mercury-containing device is broken or for any apparent release or mercury spill on or affecting County property, the supervisor and others in the area should be notified immediately. During regular work hours only, contact the County Health Department, Environmental Health Division (435-6600) for assistance if a trained individual is unavailable. No attempt should be made to clean up the spill unless an approved spill kit and an individual trained in its use are available.