

RESPONSIBLE DISPOSAL OF OBJECTS CONTAINING MERCURY

BY: JULIE WILLIAMS

Did you know that throwing away one fluorescent light bulb could pollute up to 6,000 gallons of water with toxic mercury?

On January 1 of this year the disposal of products containing mercury at landfills, transfer stations, and incinerators became prohibited in New Hampshire. This ban covers products including: thermometers, compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs), some antibacterial products, and even mercury switches in select brands of children’s light up sneakers (see the chart below for complete listing).

These items will be accepted at the Southeast Regional Refuse Disposal District’s annual Household Hazardous Waste Collection Day which will be held at the **Town Garage in Brentwood on September 13th**. Please call 929-9510 for times.

Item	Description	Alternate/Ways to cut down on Waste	Disposition
Ther-mometers	Cooking; Household; Outdoor; Bathroom; Sphygmomanometers (blood pressure cuffs).	Digital thermo-meters.	Bring items, sealed in a plastic bag and labeled “Mercury” to: HHW Collection Day on Sept. 13th, Town Garage, Brentwood Or to a local commercial recycling site such as UniWaste at Pease International Tradeport, 125 Aviation Avenue Portsmouth
Fluorescent Items	Bulbs, including household compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs); Lamps.	Install dimmer switches to cut down on bulb use; CFL’s are still currently considered the best bulbs for our environment.	
Thermostats switches and sensors	Household and Commercial thermostats; Barometers; Switches and relays, including temperature sensing switches in old clothing irons; Pilot light sensors; Gauges.	Newer models have little to no mercury.	
Batteries	Alkaline batteries sold before 5/13/96; Button cell batteries.	Use rechargeable batteries, or try solar powered items.	
Children’s Toys	Pre-1997 LA Gear Light-up sneakers; Chemistry sets; Vintage toys including Mercury Maze games and drawing games.	Newer toys should not have mercury in them.	
Misc.	Some paint (check labels); Antibacterial Products (check label for Thimerosal or merbromin)	Newer paint should not have mercury; Antibacterial products like Neosporin do not contain mercury and are good alternatives.	

For more information on regulations and responsible recycling, visit our website link found at www.hamptonfalls.org or call the New Hampshire Household Hazardous Waste Assistance Hotline at (603) 271-2047.