

Mercury Thermostat Recycling Program *Q & A*

Why have a mercury thermostat recycling program?

Heating and air conditioning contractors replace hundreds of mercury-containing thermostats each year in both commercial and residential buildings. If a convenient and environmentally sound way to recycle the mercury is not provided, thermostats are frequently left with the homeowner or facility and disposed of in the regular trash, potentially leaching mercury out of the waste stream and contaminating ground water and drinking water resources.

The objective of the mercury thermostat recycling program is to collect all brands of wall-mounted mercury-containing thermostats that are removed from service by contractors to ensure that they are managed properly. Businesses, schools and government agencies are not allowed to dispose of mercury-containing wastes in the regular trash.

What thermostats are included?

The program is for all brands of wall-mounted mercury thermostats.

Will it cost my business anything to participate in this program?

There is a one-time fee of \$15 for each collection container. The Thermostat Recycling Corporation (TRC) pays shipping and recycling costs. When a wholesaler returns a full collection container, a replacement container will be sent out with no additional fee. There is no cost associated with participation for the contractors.

If you are one of the first twenty wholesalers to volunteer to participate in this convenient recycling program, the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment will provide your initial collection container. Additional

collection containers may become available depending on wholesaler interest.

What do I need to do?

Wholesalers of heating and air conditioning equipment are asked to place a recycling container in a convenient spot at their facility so that contractors can collect out-of-service thermostats during the normal course of business and drop them off periodically into the collection box. When the container is full, all you have to do is place the Authorized Return Service label on the collection container and ship it to the TRC.

Don't forget to let your customers know that you have a collection container for their use and encourage them to bring in their wall-mounted mercury thermostats next time they come in.

What should I use to store used thermostats while my collection container is being processed?

If you only have one container, you should use a 5-gal plastic bucket with a cover until you receive a replacement container. You should label the temporary container "Used Mercury Thermostats."

What if a homeowner comes in with an old thermostat?

If a homeowner comes in with a wall-mounted mercury thermostat, it's okay for you to accept the thermostat and put it in the collection container for recycling. In fact, the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment strongly encourages you to accept these thermostats directly from homeowners as well as HVAC contractors.

What will happen to the collected thermostats?

The mercury switches will be removed from the returned thermostats and will be sent to another company for recycling.

Does this program affect thermostats sent in under warranty?

The recycling program will not change any manufacturers warranty program since these are two separate programs. Make sure that you don't include warranty thermostats in the recycling containers because you won't receive warranty credit if you do. Be sure to follow each manufacturers current warranty policy when dealing with warranty thermostats.

What about other mercury-containing products, such as batteries and fluorescent lights?

This program is **ONLY** for intact wall-mounted mercury-containing thermostats. Don't accept loose mercury switches, liquid mercury, batteries, fluorescent lights or other mercury-containing devices. These items are not part of this recycling program and will be returned to you for disposal. You will be responsible for proper management and disposal of materials returned to you by TRC.

Will there be any paperwork involved?

You will only need to place the Authorized Return Service label on the collection container so that the carrier will take the full collection container to the TRC.

There are no specific requirements to keep records, but you want to maintain a file of all Authorized Return Service tracking numbers for reference.

What is the Thermostat Recycling Corporation?

The Thermostat Recycling Corporation (TRC) is a not-for-profit corporation established by Honeywell, White-Rodgers and General Electric to operate the thermostat recycling program.

Who should I contact for more information?

Contact TRC at **1-800-238-8192** for questions about the thermostat recycling program.

If you want to obtain a free collection container or obtain more information regarding the management or disposal of other mercury-containing wastes, please contact the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, Hazardous Materials and Waste Management Division's Customer Technical Assistance Line at **303-692-3320** or **1-888-569-1831 ext. 3320**.

Please visit our website:

<http://www.cdph.e.state.co.us/hm/mercury/therm.asp>



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