



MERCURY SPILL CLEAN-UP

FIRST RESPONSE

EVACUATE THE SPILL AREA: If people were in the room when the spill occurred, be sure that their shoes, clothing, and other articles have not been splashed with mercury before they leave the room.

1. Inform your SHE Representative immediately.
 2. SHE Representative to inform the OHS Officer: Sophie Rees-Jones ASAP.
 3. OHS Officer to contact HAZMAT group via WhatsApp.
 4. Grab Chemical Spill Kit
- If mercury has contaminated any clothing or articles, remove these items from the person and place them in a plastic RUC bag.
 - Keep everyone else, out of the spill area to prevent tracking.
 - Keep the mercury from spreading into cracks, crevices, floor drains or onto sloped or porous surfaces, which are difficult to clean. If necessary, use duct tape to make a vertical "fence" around the mercury droplets and confine them to a limited area for clean-up.
 - Wash any exposed skin with soap and water.

Where possible:

- **LOWER the TEMPERATURE** of the area. The cooler the temperature, the less mercury vapours will be released into the air. Mercury vapours are odourless and colourless.
- **TURN OFF VENTILATING OR AIR CONDITIONING SYSTEMS** that could circulate air from the spill area to other parts of the building.
- **CLOSE INTERIOR DOORS** leading to other rooms, if possible ensure ventilation from the area with the spill to the **OUTDOORS** by opening windows and any exterior doors.
- Place fans, facing out to open windows or doors to speed up ventilation.
- **POST SPILL WARNING SIGNS** by entrances notifying staff/students that a mercury spill has occurred, and they should not enter the area.

Items Needed to Clean Up a Small Mercury Spill:

- Red RUC bags
- Rubber, nitrile, or latex gloves
- Paper towels
- Scoop/cardboard & squeegee
- Eyedropper
- Duct tape or shaving cream, and small paint brush
- Flashlight, cellphone light or small task light
- Powdered sulphur

The sulphur binds to the mercury and makes clean-up easier.

Mercury Spill Clean Up Instructions

1. **Put on respirator** – preferably with Mercury filter.
2. **Put on gloves.**
3. If there are any broken pieces of glass or sharp objects, pick them up with care.
4. Place all broken objects on a paper towel.
5. Fold the paper towel and place in bag. Secure the bag and label it.
6. Locate visible mercury beads.



7. Use a squeegee or cardboard to gather mercury beads into small mercury balls.
8. Use slow sweeping motions to keep mercury from becoming uncontrollable.
9. Take a flashlight, hold it at a low angle close to the floor in a darkened room and look for additional glistening beads of mercury that may be sticking to the surface or in small, cracked areas of the surface.

Note: Mercury can move surprising distances on hard-flat surfaces, so be sure to inspect the entire room, including any cracks in the floor, when searching.

10. Use the eyedropper to collect or draw up the mercury beads.

11. Slowly and carefully squeeze mercury onto a damp paper towel.
12. Alternatively, use two pieces of cardboard paper to roll the mercury beads onto the paper towel or into the bag. Place the paper towel in a zip locking bag and secure. Make sure to label the bag.
13. After you remove larger beads, put shaving cream on top of small paint brush and gently "dot" the affected area to pick up smaller hard-to-see beads.
14. Alternatively, use sticky tape, such as duct tape, to pick up any remaining small glass fragments.
15. Peel the tape very slowly from the floor to keep the mercury beads stuck to the tape.
16. Place the paint brush or duct tape in a zip locking bag and secure.
17. Make sure to label the bag.
18. **EXTRA STEP:** Use powdered sulphur to absorb the beads that are too small to see. The sulphur does two things:

- It makes the mercury easier to see since there may be a colour change from yellow to brown; and
- It binds the mercury so that it can be easily removed and suppresses the vapour of any missing mercury.

Note: Powdered sulphur may stain fabrics a dark colour.

19. Wash area with soapy water and dry.

20. Place all materials used with the clean-up, including gloves, in the RUC red bag.

21. Place all mercury contained bags and objects into the bag. Place the bag inside in 25L closable plastic drum and label it with the GHS hazard label.

After clean-up:

If possible, keep the area closed and well-ventilated to the outside for at least 24 hours after your successful clean-up.