

This presents an inhalation hazard to anyone in the area because mercury bio-accumulates in the body causing neurological and other health problems.

Unlike some liquids, mercury vapors are colorless and odorless. This makes it hard to detect without the use of specialized instruments. A pea-sized drop of mercury that goes undetected can take up to 384 days to fully vaporize.



## DO:

- Remove anything with metal before handling mercury.
- Make sure the spill is mercury: Hg has high surface tension and stays in beads. (Some thermometers are filled with Galinstan, which is silver-colored like mercury but is non-toxic.)
- Place broken or contaminated items in bags and seal them.
- Use opposed lighting to look for mercury droplets.
- Specialized mercury spill kits that contain sulfur or zinc powder can be used to amalgamate mercury and suppress mercury vapors.
- Warm, soapy water and anti-dandruff shampoo that contains at least 1% selenium sulfide can be used during the decontamination process for workers or others who may have come in contact with mercury.

## DO NOT:

- Use a standard vacuum cleaner or a broom to sweep up mercury. This will spread them even more.
- Dump mercury down a drain.
- Wash clothing or other items that have come in contact with mercury in a washing machine.
- Chase mercury droplets. Dip a paintbrush in shaving cream, mayonnaise or whipped cream and dab it on surfaces to immobilize the mercury and make it easier to pick up.

