

PSI Launches New Best Practice Guide for Successful Mercury Thermostat Collection

Massachusetts - The [Product Stewardship Institute](#) (PSI) recently launched a [best practices guide](#) for mercury thermostat collection to help state and local government officials, businesses, and non-profits nationwide address the environmental and public health challenge of collecting and properly managing mercury thermostats.

Each mercury thermostat contains approximately 4 grams of mercury, a toxic heavy metal that causes serious health problems when it finds its way into the environment. At high levels of exposure, mercury can harm the human brain, heart, kidneys, lungs, and immune system, and can negatively affect the developing nervous system of young children. While mercury thermostats are no longer sold in the United States, they have a product life of about 30 years and, therefore, remain in many buildings around the country.

"Limiting mercury exposure is a critical part of the Nebraska Product Stewardship Coalition's (NE PSC's) goals to protect Nebraska's environment and its communities," said Gene Hanlon from [NE PSC](#). "We hope that the concrete steps in this guide compel all stakeholders across the country to do their part in collecting and properly managing mercury thermostats when residents are done with them."



Under extended producer responsibility (EPR) laws in 13 states, thermostat manufacturers are required to fund and operate mercury thermostat collection and recycling programs, and do so through the industry-funded [Thermostat Recycling Corporation](#) (TRC). Several states without such laws also recover significant volumes of mercury thermostats each year through the voluntary efforts of governments, businesses, industry, and non-profits alike. Regardless of whether a state has a law or relies on voluntary initiatives, all states have access to the national mercury thermostat take-back program run by TRC.

"PSI examined mercury thermostat take-back initiatives around the country and identified the top five strategies that made these efforts successful," said Scott Cassel, chief executive officer and founder of PSI. "This guide offers a road map to help environmental and public health advocates in states with and without mercury thermostat laws protect their communities from the dangers of mercury exposure."

Funded by the Nebraska and Oklahoma state environmental agencies, this guide also includes multiple examples of exemplary thermostat collection programs.

"In partnership with the Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality, TRC, PSI, and Locke Supply Company, Covanta's Mercury Thermostat Recycling Initiative has led to the collection of over six pounds of mercury (approximately 580 thermostats) in Oklahoma in the last year," said Matt Newman, director of business management at [Covanta](#) Tulsa. "This is a prime example of public and private stakeholders working together to provide a positive service to our communities - one part of the key strategies outlined in PSI's guide."

Interested in improving mercury thermostat collection in your community? Read the [Lessons Learned: Voluntary Mercury Thermostat Take-Back Programs Guide](#) today, or listen to PSI's free webinar, ["On the Rise: Improving Mercury Thermostat Collection Programs."](#)

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