

How to clean up mercury

Follow these steps to clean up mercury from a broken auto switch:

- Do not use a vacuum cleaner. This will spread mercury into the air and contaminate the vacuum.
- Keep people and pets away until you finish cleanup.
- Wear gloves you can throw away.
- As you clean up, put all waste into a glass container with metal lid, or into a heavy duty plastic container with a tight lid.
- Use stiff paper to scoop up bigger balls of mercury. Put mercury and paper in waste container.
- Pat spill area with sticky side of duct tape or masking tape to pick up small pieces of mercury. Put dirty tape in waste container.
- Wipe the area with a wet wipe or damp paper towel. Put dirty wipe/paper towel in waste container.
- Put dirty gloves into waste container.
- Use a flashlight to check for missed mercury, and clean up with tape as needed.
- Wash your hands.
- Label the container “mercury waste”.
- Call, or take the container to, a hazardous waste company.
- If you need to store the waste container, put it in a place away from people where it will not get broken by mistake.
- Open windows and doors to air out the space for at least 15 minutes and up to several hours.

For help with clean up instructions, you can call DEP Spill Response at 1-800-452-4664.