

New Ohio Law Bans Mercury in Consumer Products

An important step in the regulation of mercury-containing products has been achieved, thanks to the hard work of Ohio EPA. House Bill 443, initiated and authored by Ohio EPA, was signed into law on January 4, 2007. Over time, most thermometers, thermostats and novelty items sold in Ohio will be mercury free.

Surprisingly, prior to the bill's passage, Ohio was the only Great Lakes state without any type of state-mandated consumer product mercury ban. Until now, mercury reduction efforts have been voluntary, and some Ohio industries, retailers and communities were obliging.

Ohio EPA worked for well over a year to get the mercury provisions of HB 443 passed, along with a diverse array of other interested parties, including the Ohio Manufacturers Association, the Associated Builders and Contractors, Ohio Nurses Association, Ohio Environmental Council and several more. The legislation was initially sponsored by State Senator Bob Spada (R-North Royalton) and State Representative Jon Peterson (R-Delaware).

Schools have not be permitted to buy mercury or mercury-added measuring devices for classroom use since April 6, 2007. Six months later, Ohio will ban the sale and distribution of mercury-containing thermometers and novelty items. Beginning April 6, 2008, a ban on the sale and reinstallation of mercury-containing thermostats will go into effect.

As of April 2008, no manufacturer can offer a mercury-containing thermometer or thermostat for sale or distribution in Ohio. Exceptions for thermometers include a device required to comply with federal law, or required as the only feasible tool available for purposes specified in the law. Exceptions for thermostats include residences with a visually impaired person, or a manufacturing process where the device is used to sense and control temperature.

In addition, the law bans the sale or distribution of novelty items that contain mercury, like games, figurines, toys, yard statues, jewelry and many others. For now, the ban does not include items that contain only the mercury found in a button cell battery, but those will be added to the ban in 2011.

For further information, click [here](#) for the Ohio EPA release.