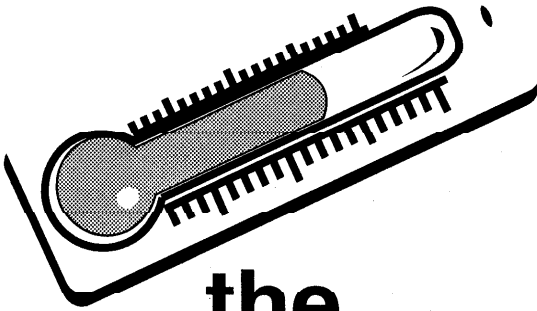


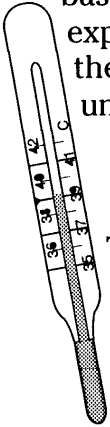
**What Happened
to**



**the
Mercury
Thermometers?**

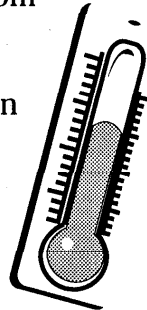
DANE COUNTY COMMUNITIES BAN MERCURY FEVER AND BASAL THERMOMETERS

To protect environmental and human health, the Dane County Board, the City of Madison, and other communities have banned the sale and distribution of mercury fever and basal thermometers. This bulletin is intended to briefly explain the toxic nature of mercury, the alternative thermometers available, and disposal options for your unneeded or broken thermometers.



TOXIC MERCURY

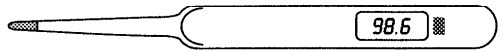
There are real risks to your family's health and to the environment from the exposure to mercury from mercury thermometers that are broken or thrown in the trash. Mercury is a toxic element that can exist in several forms such as liquid metal, in various chemical salts and amalgams, and as a gas. The small amount of the silver-colored liquid mercury in a broken fever thermometer can contaminate a small room or a 10-acre lake. The Wisconsin DNR recently implemented statewide fish consumption advisories due to mercury contamination. Given certain exposures in food or air, mercury can affect the brain, spinal cord, kidneys, and liver. In pregnant women, mercury-contaminated food can prevent the fetal brain and nervous system from developing normally.



AFFORDABLE ALTERNATIVE THERMOMETERS

Several mercury-free alternative thermometers are available which are used in familiar ways. These thermometers can be used to take oral, rectal, or armpit temperatures.

- **Digital electronic** - plastic, easy to read, contains recyclable 'button' batteries, and digital basal thermometers are available for family planning.
- **Glass alcohol** - glass device with red alcohol instead of mercury.
- **Glass Galinstan** - glass device with a newly developed 3-metal alloy that looks and flows like mercury, 'bilingual' in that it may contain both Celsius and Fahrenheit scales.



PROPER MERCURY DISPOSAL

Please do not throw your thermometer, or spilled mercury, into the trash or flush it down the drain. You must properly handle toxic mercury to protect your health and to keep it out of the environment.

WHERE SHOULD OLD MERCURY THERMOMETERS GO?

Free Disposal: Take your thermometer, in its plastic case or double-bagged in plastic, to the Clean Sweep facility at 2302 Fish Hatchery Road, 1/2-mile north of the Beltline Highway, behind the Dane County Highway Department garage. Clean Sweep is open May through October. Call Clean Sweep at 294-5366 for their days and hours of operation.

SPILL CLEAN-UP

Call the City of Madison Public Health Department (266-4821) or the Dane County Environmental Health Section (242-6515) to get directions for cleaning up a small mercury spill from a thermometer. The following internet web site provides directions for cleaning up a small spill as well:

<http://www.dhfs.state.wi.us/> search for "mercury."

