



**Snohomish County  
Public Works**

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Date: November 29, 2010

To: Building Contractors in Snohomish County

From: Snohomish County Solid Waste Division

Re: **Recycling Used Mercury-Switch Thermostats**

We ask for your help in keeping mercury out of our local environment. Local laws prohibit mercury from being disposed of in regular garbage. When you run across a mercury-bearing thermostat, you can recycle it for free at numerous locations in Snohomish County and surrounding areas.

This is extremely important, because if the thermostat ends up going to the landfill, the small glass ampoule containing the mercury is likely to break in the landfill, if not en route to the landfill. Breakage allows the liquid mercury to vaporize and release into the atmosphere. Airborne mercury then deposits into lakes and streams when it rains. Some of the mercury is converted into methyl mercury, a highly persistent compound that contaminates our water and our fish. The methyl mercury concentrates up the food chain, especially in certain fish species, affecting consumers like you and your family. Infants, children and pregnant or lactating mothers must take special precautions to minimize mercury exposure from fish.

The enclosed brochure provides a list of numerous, convenient drop-off locations for mercury-bearing thermostats. These collection sites are part of the Thermostat Recycling Corporation's (TRC) national take-back program for mercury thermostats, which is paid for by thermostat manufacturers.

Simply stop by and drop off mercury thermostats at any of these participating locations for free, no questions asked. Remember to keep the entire thermostat intact; do not remove the mercury ampoule.

Thank you for your assistance in addressing this community health issue.

If you have questions about this program, visit [www.thermostat-recycle.org](http://www.thermostat-recycle.org).