

Disposal of Mercury-Containing Thermostats

Since 2005, New York State has prohibited the disposal of mercury-containing thermostats in the trash. On December 18, 2013, the [Mercury Thermostat Collection Act of 2013 \(Act\)](#) was enacted which will provide for the mandatory and sound management of out-of-service mercury- containing thermostats by providing homeowners and contractors with more convenient opportunities for the safe drop off and recycling of mercury thermostats, thereby diverting them from being disposed of in landfills and municipal waste combustion facilities.

The Act requires thermostat manufacturers to establish and maintain a program for the collection, transportation, recycling, and proper management of out-of-service mercury thermostats at no cost to contractors or other persons participating in the program.

Manufacturers are required to:

- By July 1, 2014, compile a list of thermostat wholesalers in the state, offer them collection containers and make collection containers available to all qualified contractors, thermostat wholesalers, retailers, and local governments that request containers.
- Beginning July 1, 2014, conduct education and outreach efforts, including establishment of a website that provides for the identification of collection sites and the development of materials for distribution by wholesalers, retailers, contractors and local governments.

The Act also requires state agencies such as NYSERDA, which administer programs that promote energy efficiency through upgrade, replacement, and/or removal of heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems, to inform contractors of their statutory obligation to deliver removed or replaced mercury-containing thermostats to a mercury thermostat collection site as well as the prohibition of disposing of mercury-containing thermostats in a solid waste management facility.

Contractors can locate authorized mercury-containing thermometer collections sites through <http://www.thermostat-recycle.org/>, by contacting local HVAC wholesalers, or their local solid waste authority. For additional information on the Act, frequently asked questions and the proper procedures for the cleanup of small mercury spills, please visit the New York State Department of Environmental conservation website at <http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/92655.html>.