

Product Stewardship Institute launches guide for mercury thermostat collection

Guide offers best practices to collect mercury thermostats, reducing mercury exposure.

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The Boston-based **Product Stewardship Institute** (PSI) has introduced a best practices guide for mercury thermostat collection to help state and local government officials, businesses and nonprofits nationwide address the environmental and public health challenge of properly managing mercury thermostats.

The guide, which is funded by the Nebraska and Oklahoma state environmental agencies, also includes multiple examples of exemplary thermostat collection programs.

"Limiting mercury exposure is a critical part of the Nebraska Product Stewardship Coalition's (NE PSC's) goals to protect Nebraska's environment and its communities," says Gene Hanlon of the NE PSC. "We hope that the concrete steps in this guide compel all stakeholders across the country to do their part in collecting and properly managing mercury thermostats when residents are done with them."

Under extended producer responsibility (EPR) laws in 13 states, thermostat manufacturers are required to fund and operate mercury thermostat collection and recycling programs through the industry-funded **Thermostat Recycling Corp.** (TRC), Alexandria, Virginia. Several states without such laws also recover significant volumes of mercury thermostats each year through voluntary efforts by organizations, business and governments. All states have access to the national mercury thermostat take-back program run by TRC, regardless of whether they have laws or rely on voluntary initiatives.

"PSI examined mercury thermostat take-back initiatives around the country and identified the top five strategies that made these efforts successful," says Scott Cassel, chief executive officer and founder of PSI. "This guide offers a road map to help environmental and public health advocates in states with and without mercury thermostat laws protect their communities from the dangers of mercury exposure."

"In partnership with the Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality, TRC, PSI and Locke Supply Co., Covanta's Mercury Thermostat Recycling Initiative has led to the collection of over 6 pounds of mercury (approximately 580 thermostats) in Oklahoma in the last year," says Matt Newman, director of business management at **Covanta Tulsa**. "This is a prime example of public and private stakeholders working together to provide a positive service to our communities—one part of the key strategies outlined in PSI's guide."