



N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources

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RECYCLING OF MERCURY THERMOSTATS CONTINUES TO INCREASE

RALEIGH – The N.C. Division of Pollution Prevention and Environmental Assistance is continuing its efforts to prevent mercury wall thermostats from ending up in the state’s landfills with a recovery and recycling program.

The mercury switch recycling program, which began in January 2007, aims to reduce the amount of mercury that is released into the environment. Mercury-containing thermostats are a safety hazard and improper handling of these devices can contaminate surface water and endanger peoples’ health. Children are especially susceptible to mercury’s toxic effects.

In 2005, only 340 mercury thermostats were collected for recycling. In 2006, a total of 1,852 mercury thermostats were collected, making an increase in collection of 444.7 percent. Additionally, collection centers saw an increase of 61.6 percent for a total of 2,994 thermostats in 2007. The number of mercury thermostat collection bins jumped from 49 in 2005 to 76 in 2007.

The program is urging heating, ventilating and air conditioning wholesalers to recycle thermostats that contain mercury. The Thermostat Recycling Corporation facilitates collection by heating, ventilating and air conditioning wholesalers from contractors of all brands of used, wall-mounted mercury switch thermostats. HVAC contractors will be able to make a positive impact on the environment by recycling these thermostats.

Participating wholesalers in the Thermostat Recycling Corporation in North Carolina are: R.E. Michael Company, statewide; Johnstone Supply in Fayetteville and Jacksonville and C.C. Dickson in New Bern and Hickory. The Thermostat Recycling Corporation is a not-for-profit corporation started by three National Electrical Manufacturers Association member companies.

The thermostat collection service is free, and mercury from recycled thermostats can be reprocessed for safer applications.

For more information, contact the Division of Pollution Prevention and Environmental Assistance at (919) 715-6500 or check out the Web page, <http://www.p2pays.org/mercury/>. You may also visit the Web site for the National Electrical Manufacturers Association at: <http://www.nema.org/gov/ehs/trc/>.

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