

PHYSICAL PLANT

Plumbing Shop

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE FOR PLUMBING OPERATIONS INVOLVING POSSIBLE MERCURY CONTAMINATION

Stage one: Be aware that mercury can be in any plumbing!

Mercury has been found in drains on campus and was likely poured down drains before hazardous waste regulations in 1980 made this practice illegal. It can still be found in drains, especially in traps and horizontal lines where it is captured by the sludge that has accumulated in these lines over the years. While it is going to be most frequently associated with any building containing laboratories, you should assume that any line that you need to repair or replace could have mercury in it. For this reason, you need to approach any job with an appropriate amount of awareness for finding mercury in the plumbing. This can be performed visually by looking for mercury in piping and traps. An alternate method to hot cutting is required, whenever feasible, until it is determined that mercury is not present. All piping should be removed over a bucket and/or plastic to prevent any mercury from spilling. Chemical impervious gloves such as nitrile or rubber should be used while working on piping. Leather gloves can be used over these chemical impervious gloves. If you observe mercury in piping, stop the job, inform your supervisor, co-workers and EH&S, cordon off the immediate area of the work, and wait for EH&S to arrive on scene. Any exposure concerns can be discussed with EH&S personnel. In order for any further work to occur on contaminated piping, the following procedures will be followed in detail. This is stage two: Mercury found in plumbing.

Start date: _____

Completion date: _____

Work location:

PROCEDURE CHECKLIST (Complete in sequence)	
STEP	Supervisor INITIALS
Contact EH&S to notify of location and scope of work so personnel can assess all hazardous conditions and provide appropriate recommendations prior to beginning job (EH&S signature required below). EH&S will work alongside plumbers while work is performed to address safety and environmental issues. The work area may need to be sealed off to protect building occupants from mercury vapor or from tracking mercury through the building. All work areas should be sealed with plastic to capture any mercury that escapes from the immediate pipe removal area which should be protected with a plastic bucket or tub.	
Review this SOP with affected employees. Review mercury fact sheet provided by EH&S.	
Use appropriate ventilation for the work space and don personal protective equipment; reference PPE certification prepared by EH&S for task. Air monitoring will be performed by EH&S during remediation work.	
Perform task being careful not to spread mercury or create fumes. No hot cutting methods allowed although a reciprocating saw is allowed as needed on galvanized and plastic. Seal all pipe ends before removal to a waste container.	

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Remove and properly dispose of contaminated PPE, plastic etc. and decontaminate tools, buckets, tubs, scaffolding, ladders as needed with soap and water. All rinsate can be collected in a bucket and given to EH&S.	
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Special materials needed besides plumbing tools and PPE: plastic, duct tape, trash bags, soap and water, brushes for deconning, buckets and tubs.

Shop Foreman Signature:

EHSM Signature:
