

Manufacturer-Funded Product Stewardship for Mercury Thermostats

A Go-To Guide for Local Government

Product stewardship is a policy that ensures that all those involved in the lifecycle of a product share responsibility for reducing its health and environmental impacts, with producers bearing primary financial responsibility.

For more information about product stewardship, and how the Product Stewardship Institute is working to bring these programs to your state, visit www.productstewardship.us.

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The U.S. generates more than 164 million tons of waste annually, at high costs to local government programs. The “end-of-life” management for certain products is of particular concern, whether it's because they are toxic, bulky, and/or particularly costly to manage. Fortunately, product stewardship solutions for these once problematic categories of goods are beginning to emerge, with many manufacturers stepping in to provide affordable solutions for managing consumer products along their lifecycle.

This fact sheet is part of a go-to guide for local government on manufacturer-funded product stewardship programs, designed to provide a starting point for local recycling coordinators and household hazardous waste (HHW) managers as they seek to introduce new opportunities into their communities.

Program Spotlight: Thermostat Recycling Corporation (TRC)



Product: Mercury thermostats

Who can participate?

Heating and Air Conditioning (HVAC) wholesale distributors (participation mandatory in 12 states)

- Local government waste collection facilities
- Retailers that sell thermostats
- Contractors that service/maintain heating, air conditioning, electrical, or plumbing systems. Must have seven or more service technicians OR serve a rural area. Contractor recycling is mandatory in 13 states.

Which specific products are covered?

- Only mercury switch thermostats (All other mercury containing products strictly prohibited)

How does it work?

- Eligible participants can sign up online or by mail to receive a collection bin.
- Contractors, service technicians, and homeowners drop off waste mercury thermostats in the collection bins
- When bin is full, or once per year, return the bin to TRC using pre-paid shipping labels. Participants should verify that the collection bin contains only intact mercury thermostats. Packaging instructions are available at http://www.thermostat-recycle.org/resources/safe_storage_transport.
- TRC will receive the thermostats, manage the mercury, and track collections. The empty bin will then be returned to start the process over again.

How can local governments access the program?

- Local governments can sign up as a collection site online at http://www.thermostat-recycle.org/signup/household_hazardous_waste

What are the costs?

- **\$25 one-time fee** for each thermostat collection container (except in NY and CA)
- TRC covers all transportation and processing costs

Learn more at <http://www.thermostat-recycle.org/>



Sign up and learn more!

www.productstewardship.us/?page=2015_USDA5