



# PRAIRIELAND SOLID WASTE NEWS

SUMMER 2004

## HELP US GET THE MERCURY AND LEAD OUT... OF THE COMPOST



### GET THE MERCURY OUT...

Mercury is a naturally occurring metal, which is present at very low levels in bedrock, soil and water throughout Minnesota. Mercury causes a variety of health effects, particularly for young children, including nervous system damage, liver damage, kidney damage, muscle tremors, impaired coordination and mental disturbances.

Minnesota state law makes it illegal for anyone to put mercury or mercury-containing products in the trash. Mercury is being phased out of many retail products sold in Minnesota. As a consumer, educate yourself; do not purchase mercury-containing items if a substitute is available. When you own a product containing mercury and disposal is needed, be sure to take the responsibility for proper disposal by

taking the waste product to a household hazardous waste collection in Martin and Faribault Counties. These collections are held regularly during the summer months.

The products listed above may contain mercury. Please remember they need proper management. Products containing mercury pose great health risks to humans and wildlife if mixed with other garbage. In Martin and Faribault counties all of the garbage is taken to the PrairieLand Compost Facility and processed into Municipal Solid Waste Compost. Some of this compost is used as a soil amendment in fields or bedding for cattle and then land applied. We need to avoid allowing the mercury to escape into the environment by keeping it out of our garbage!!

#### PRODUCTS CONTAINING MERCURY

- ✦ Thermometers
- ✦ Old latex paints
- ✦ Some oil-base paints
- ✦ Dental amalgam
- ✦ Chemistry sets/ older toys/ games
- ✦ Nickel-cadmium rechargeable batteries
- ✦ Lead-acid automotive batteries
- ✦ Button/ coin batteries
- ✦ Thermostats, switches
- ✦ Contact lens solution
- ✦ High-intensity discharge lamps

**PRODUCTS CONTAINING LEAD OR MERCURY POSE GREAT HEALTH RISKS TO HUMANS AND WILDLIFE IF MIXED WITH OTHER GARBAGE.**

**GET THE LEAD OUT...**

Lead is a toxic metal that, in sufficient quantities, has adverse effects on the nervous and reproductive systems of mammals and birds. Found in most fishing jigs and sinkers, this metal is poisoning wildlife such as loons and eagles.

Like mercury, Minnesota state law makes it illegal for anyone to put lead or lead-containing products in the trash. It is important to recognize which products, within your home, may contain lead. If these products are not wanted, they should be sorted from your household garbage and taken to a Martin and Faribault County household hazardous waste collection, during the summer months. Products such as batteries, many containing both mercury and lead can be taken to a county battery recycling drop-site.

When lead is present in compost that is spread on the land, birds and mammals are exposed to this metal. We need to get the lead out of the garbage!!

**PRODUCTS CONTAINING LEAD**

- ✦ Lead acid batteries
- ✦ Wine bottle closures
- ✦ Some fish nets and sinkers
- ✦ Electronics, especially computers
- ✦ Brass
- ✦ Plastic wire insulation
- ✦ Some aerosol paints
- ✦ Glazed enamel labels
- ✦ Ceramic glaze
- ✦ Rechargeable Batteries

**HARMFUL EFFECTS OF LEAD**

- ✦ Damage to brain and nervous system
- ✦ Behavior and learning problems
- ✦ Slowed growth
- ✦ Difficulties during pregnancy
- ✦ High blood pressure
- ✦ Digestive problems
- ✦ Nerve disorders
- ✦ Memory and concentration problems
- ✦ Muscle and joint pain
- ✦ Hearing problems
- ✦ Headaches

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT MERCURY, LEAD OR HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE CONTACT:**

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