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Novelty Items Banned in Ohio

To protect the public and environment from harmful effects of mercury, novelty items that contain mercury button cell batteries may no longer be sold in Ohio.

A novelty item is described in Ohio law as a product in which mercury is present that is intended mainly for personal or household enjoyment or adornment. Items covered include, but are not limited to, those intended for use as practical jokes, figurines, adornments, toys, games, cards, ornaments, yard statues, figurines, candles, jewelry, holiday decorations, footwear and other items of apparel or similar products.

Mercury travels up the food chain, accumulating in human, fish and wildlife tissue and does not break down. It can be absorbed through skin, ingested or inhaled and is a neurotoxin. It can affect developing fetuses and children which could result in learning disabilities. Exposure to high doses of mercury can also cause vision, speech and hearing impairment or respiratory problems.

Previous bans under the 2007 law include:

- prohibiting the purchase by K-12 schools of mercury, mercury-compounds and mercury-measuring devices for the classroom as of April 2007;
- prohibiting the sale of mercury thermometers in Ohio as of October 2007; and
- prohibiting the sale or installation of mercury-containing thermostats in Ohio as of April 2008.

Exceptions for thermometers include a device required to comply with federal law, or required as the only feasible tool available for purposes specified in the law. Exceptions for thermostats include residences with a visually impaired person, or a manufacturing process where the device is used to sense and control temperature.

Mercury-added novelties with a fluorescent light bulb -- such as hand-held video game consoles or cell phones -- are not included in the ban.

Check Ohio EPA's website for more information on [Ohio's mercury product ban](#).