

MERCURY POLLUTION: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

What is Mercury?

Mercury is a toxic element that pollutes our lakes and streams, including those right here in Missouri.

Where Does Mercury Come From?

The single, largest source of mercury pollution; not only in Missouri, but the United States, is from coal-burning power plants. Other sources of mercury include cement kilns, waste incinerators, and chlor-alkali plants. Mercury is also contained in household products like thermometers, thermostats, switches, fluorescent light bulbs, and some electronic products.

How Can Mercury Hurt You?

Power plants burning coal release mercury into the air. This mercury then returns to the earth via rain or snow where it ends up in our lakes and streams. Mercury primarily hurts people when they eat contaminated fish. All lakes and streams in Missouri have mercury fish warnings.

Mercury interferes with the central nervous system and can cause permanent brain damage. Children and fetuses are at greatest risk of harm and may suffer from a variety of developmental disabilities. The Environmental Protection Agency estimates that one in six women of childbearing age have high enough levels of mercury in their blood to endanger a developing fetus. This equates to thousands of at-risk babies born to families in Missouri each year!



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Missouri Department of Natural Resources
"Integrity and excellence in all we do"

Mercury in Missouri Streams and Lakes

Water Pollution Control Program fact sheet

7/2003

What is mercury?

Mercury is a naturally occurring element found in air, water, soil and rocks. Mercury, often referred to as "Quicksilver", is a heavy, silvery colored liquid and a member of a group of elements called "heavy metals". Common household uses include thermometers, batteries, thermostats, mercury light switches and fluorescent light bulbs. See the section of this fact sheet titled, "What can I do..." for information on mercury-free alternatives to many products.

Why do we have a fish consumption advisory for mercury in largemouth bass?

The Missouri Departments of Conservation, Health and Senior Services, and Natural Resources have sampled fish filets and whole fish for mercury and other contaminants for a number of years. The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services has been carefully monitoring the national debate and international health studies related to consumption of fish containing mercury. Results of these studies and new risk estimates by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency suggest that mercury levels in large-mouth bass over 12 inches long pose a health threat to our children. Therefore the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services is advising women who are pregnant, who may become pregnant, or nursing mothers and children 12 years of age and younger not to eat any Largemouth Bass over 12 inches in length from anywhere in Missouri.

Company	Plant name	Mercury emissions
INDEPENDENCE POWER AND LIGHT	MISSOURI CITY STATION	0.10
INDEPENDENCE POWER AND LIGHT	BLUE VALLEY STATION	0.51
EMPIRE DISTRICT ELECTRIC CO	ASBURY PLANT	21.03
TRIGEN ENERGY CORPORATION	GRAND AVENUE STATION	23.12
KANSAS CITY POWER & LIGHT CO	HAWTHORN STATION	50.76
KANSAS CITY POWER & LIGHT CO	MONTROSE GENERATING STATION	125.10
KANSAS CITY POWER & LIGHT CO	IATAN GENERATING STATION	191.50
ASSOCIATED ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE	THOMAS HILL ENERGY CENTER POWER DIVISION	260.00
ASSOCIATED ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE	NEW MADRID POWER PLANT	283.57
AMERENUE	RUSH ISLAND PLANT	348.00
AMERENUE	LABADIE PLANT	730.00

TOTAL lbs./year **2033.69**