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California Mercury Thermostat Law Went Into Effect July 1
The Recycling of Mercury Thermostats is Now Mandatory in California

July 8, 2009—a new California law designed to increase the collection and recycling of waste mercury thermostats went into effect July 1, 2009. The Mercury Thermostat Collection Act of 2008 (AB 2347, Ruskin) requires a contractor who installs heating, ventilation, and air-conditioning components and who removes out-of-service mercury thermostats to take them to a collection location for recycling. The California law follows similar legislation in Iowa, Maine, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, and Vermont.

Mercury is a toxic metal that in its various forms can accumulate in living tissue and cause adverse health effects. When a mercury thermostat is broken and disposed of in solid waste landfill or incinerator, the mercury can contaminate the air, surface water, and ground water.

Under the new law, manufacturers must collect and recycle waste mercury thermostats at no cost to contractors and homeowners. Additionally, the law requires every HVAC wholesaler with a physical location in California to act as a collection site for waste mercury thermostats.

The Thermostat Recycling Corporation (TRC) is providing collection containers to HVAC wholesalers for a nominal one-time fee. TRC absorbs all subsequent costs to ship and recycle waste mercury thermostats.

“TRC wants contractors to know that it’s easy, convenient, and most importantly free for them to properly dispose of mercury thermostats,” said Mark Tibbetts, TRC’s executive director. “To comply with the law, all HVAC contractors need to do is to hang onto the mercury thermostats they remove from service and drop them off for recycling at their local HVAC supplier.”

TRC is a not-for-profit corporation founded in 1997 by thermostat manufacturers to collect and properly dispose of mercury thermostats removed from service. TRC provides HVAC contractors and consumers with a no-cost solution for properly disposing mercury-switch thermostats. Nationally, TRC has more than 3,000 collection containers in 48 states. TRC currently represents nearly 30 manufacturers that branded and distributed mercury-switch thermostats in the United States.

For more information about the TRC program, contact Executive Director Mark Tibbetts at (703) 841-3246 or Mark_Tibbetts@nema.org. www.thermosat-recycle.org.