

Guidance for the Transportation and Temporary Storage of Metallic Mercury Waste

This guidance relates specifically to metallic mercury and not to mercury compounds or mixtures. Metallic mercury (Hg, CAS RN 7439-97-6) is also known as elemental mercury and is liquid at room temperature. The [LoW code](#) for metallic mercury is 16 03 07*.

The use and occurrence of metallic/elemental mercury in Ireland is now expected to be very limited, however there may be residual quantities in laboratories (both commercial and academic), in lighthouses and in industrial installations which had historically used mercury as part of relevant processes.

Mercury is a highly toxic metal, damaging to the environment, in particular to aquatic life. Mercury exposure in humans even in small amounts can cause serious health effects. Its use is heavily restricted globally under the Minamata Convention, with even stricter regulation in place in Europe compared to the Minamata requirements.

The Environmental Protection Agency (www.epa.ie) is the competent authority in Ireland in relation to the European regulations (Regulation EU 2017/852) which control use of mercury across the European Union, including Ireland. These regulations are directly enforceable in Ireland and are also supported by relevant Irish Legislation (S.I. No. 533 of 2018 - European Union (Mercury) Regulations 2018).

Waste Permits for Transportation of Metallic Mercury

The transportation of metallic mercury (Hg, CAS RN 7439-97-6) from a waste producer to an EPA licensed hazardous waste transfer facility must be transported using a waste operator with a valid waste collection permit detailing LoW Code 16 03 07* metallic mercury in accordance with Council Directive 2008/98/EC, as amended, Commission Decision 2014/955/EU and in accordance with current [ADR Regulations](#) for road, [RID Regulations](#) for rail and with [IMDG Code](#) for sea.

Temporary Storage of Metallic Mercury Waste for up to 1 year

The temporary storage, for up to 1 year, of waste metallic mercury in its liquid form is subject to the permit requirements according to Article 23 of Directive 2008/98/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 November 2008 on waste, as amended.

EPA licensed hazardous waste facilities which are permitted to accept metallic mercury waste should take particular measures to ensure that it is carefully managed, including:

- Clear segregation and labelling of mercury storage areas;
- Provision of secure areas for metallic mercury storage;
- Regular documented inspections of such storage areas;

- Effective planning to ensure that period of storage is minimised, and in all cases metallic mercury is removed within 12 months of receipt unless the facility is specifically permitted for the temporary storage of metallic mercury waste exceeding 12 months;
- Consideration of mercury storage issues as part of development of environmental objectives and targets;
- Consideration of environmental risks or risk control measures to deal with metallic mercury in the Environmental Liabilities Risk Assessment (ELRA), Closure Restoration and Aftercare Management Plan (CRAMP), Fire Risk Assessment and Emergency Response Procedures;
- Adherence to any other relevant licence conditions.
- Maintaining registers of mercury waste shipments received at the facility, stored at the facility at the end of each month and shipments of mercury waste leaving the facility.

Temporary Storage of Metallic Mercury Waste for more than 1 year

Directive 1999/31/EC, as amended, and Council Decision 2003/33/EC of 19 December 2002 establishing criteria and procedures for the acceptance of waste at landfills pursuant to Article 16 of and Annex II to Directive 1999/31/EC (4) apply to facilities for the storage of metallic mercury for more than 1 year according to Article 13 of Regulation (EC) 2017/852.

This requires, in particular, that all facilities engaging in the temporary storage of metallic mercury in its liquid form for more than 1 year need a permit according to Articles 7, 8 and 9 of Directive 1999/31/EC and that such facilities are subject to the control and monitoring requirements laid down in Article 12 of that Directive, as well as, in the case of underground storage, to the safety assessment requirements according to Appendix A of Decision 2003/33/EC.

[Specific technical requirements](#) for the temporary storage of metallic mercury wastes for periods greater than 12 months are detailed in [Council Directive 2011/97/EU](#), which amends, Annexes I, II and III of Directive 1999/31/EC. These requirements relate to the provision of specific storage infrastructure, composition of the mercury, containment requirements, acceptance criteria, certification of containers, record keeping, monitoring, inspection and emergency requirements.

In addition, the provisions of Directive 2012/18/EU on the control of major-accident hazards involving dangerous substances apply to facilities for the temporary above-ground storage according to Article 7 of Regulation (EC) 2017/852.

Any facility that intends to store metallic mercury on a temporary basis for more than 1 year would need a licence review prior to such storage taking place.

Each year by 31 January, the operators of EPA licensed hazardous waste transfer facilities shall transmit the register (Mercury Return Form A, B and C) for the previous calendar year as per Article 14 Regulation (EU) 2017/852 to the EPA email: mercuryreporting@epa.ie

Storage of metallic mercury waste for a period greater than 12 months without meeting the requirements of S.I. 72 of 2013/EU Directive 2011/97/EU is an offence under the Waste Management Act and further enforcement action may be taken by the EPA in such cases.

Permanent Storage of Metallic Mercury Waste

Permanent storage of metallic mercury waste is carried out in accordance with Article 13 of Regulation (EU) 2017/852. Prior to being permanently disposed of, metallic mercury waste shall undergo conversion and solidification.

For any further information or queries please contact: mercuryreporting@epa.ie