

Auto Recycler's News



Maine's Mercury Switch Recycling Program Grows

Mercury levels in Maine's environment have become a problem. The mercury is being released to the environment, in part, from human activities. Mercury in products, for example, can be found in our homes and the motor vehicles we drive.

Nearly 90% of the mercury in motor vehicles is contained in tilt switches used to operate interior lights under hood and trunk lids. Most of the rest is in anti-lock braking sensors and high intensity discharge lamps. In the case of motor vehicles, mercury is released during shredding and when shredded metal from scrapped vehicles is smelted to make recycled steel. Most of this mercury eventu-

ally will be released to the air or into the environment unless these switches are removed before the vehicles are crushed.

This is why the Maine Legislature created a program to get these switches out before vehicles are flattened for recycling. Under the program, auto dismantlers and auto-makers share responsibility. Your role as a dismantler or salvage yard operator is to remove the switches and store them for recycling. Auto-makers will recycle the switches and pay you \$1 per switch to help offset your removal costs.

Maine law requires that mercury

switches and HID headlamps be removed before a motor vehicle is flattened or crushed. The lamps may be placed in your parts inventory for re-sale or recycled. The mercury switches must be recycled.



Bob Miville of Aable Auto Parts Recognized

Robert Miville, owner of Aable Auto Parts, Chelsea, Maine was honored on Earth Day April 22, 2003 with an EPA Environmental Merit Award for his work on a training video for the Mercury Automotive Switch Removal Program.

The Maine Department of Environmental Protection embarked on the state's first-in-the-nation manufacturer take-back program of automobile mercury switches this year.

The program, mandated under state law, will help prevent the

release of an estimated 1,500 pounds of mercury in Maine.

Bob Miville was one of the industry leaders from the Maine Auto Recyclers Association who helped get the legislation approved. He also volunteered his shop and time as the spokesperson for a video explaining why the removal of the switches was important and how to do it.

The video has received national acclaim and has been used for training and information sessions across the state. If you would like a copy, please call either Enid Mitnik at 287-8556 or Roy Krout at 1-800-789-

9802 at the Maine Department of Environmental Protection.



Bob Miville and staff during filming of the Mercury Switch Training Video.

Lawsuit Status Challenging Maine's Mercury Switch Law

The Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers (AAM) filed suit last fall challenging the constitutionality of Maine's mercury switch law in Maine's federal district court. Since AAM never sought to delay implementation of the law, the program remains in effect while the lawsuit is pending.

The parties to the case include AAM as plaintiff, the DEP Commissioner as defendant represented by the Attorney General's office, and a

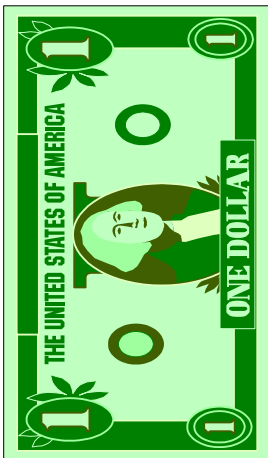
number of environmental and public health organizations who received permission from the Court to participate in the case to help defend the law.

Through the fall and winter the parties completed the fact-finding part of the litigation, called discovery, when documents can be requested and witnesses are cross-examined. Following discovery, the parties submitted their legal arguments to the Court, a process which finished

in late April. A decision from the District Court may be issued soon.



First Check received for Mercury Switch Program



The first check has been received! Littlefield's Garage (Kirby Littlefield) located in Corinna was the first business to turn in its switches to a collection center.

Littlefield's business turned in 179 switches, accompanying paperwork with the VINs, and received his

check back for \$179. Great job Littlefield's Garage!

The Maine DEP encourages anyone collecting switches to turn the switches in at WESCO's Bangor or Portland facilities when you are in the area, no need to wait until the bucket is full.

At the end of this year, the

Maine DEP will be summarizing how the program is going including the number of switches that have been turned in. Keep those switches coming!

Bangor WESCO facility:
80 Farm Rd.
Phone: 942-6713

Portland WESCO facility:
327 Marginal Way
Phone: 772-6507

Best Management Practices

Does your business use **Best Management Practices** (BMPs)? To assist your business, Maine DEP has developed a manual of BMPs that includes directions for removal and handling of mercury containing switches and other universal wastes.

The BMPs also include proper handling of automotive fluids and associated wastes. These have been distributed at regional DEP training sessions for businesses and municipal officials, and sent to interested parties. If you have not received a copy,

please contact our Small Business Assistance Program.

Our staff is also visiting businesses to provide this information and answer any questions you have regarding mercury switch collection (we have mercury switch collection containers and labels we can give you) and other best management practices.

Please contact staff persons Roy Krout or Enid Mitnik (phone number: 287-8556). Our toll-free small

business assistance phone number is **1-800-789-9802**.



Junkyard, Scrap Yard, Autorecycler Legislation Considered this Session

A bill changing a number of provisions in Maine law regarding junkyards, automobile graveyards and automobile recycling businesses was recently enacted by the Legislature and signed into law.

It is entitled "An Act to Amend the Laws Regarding Junkyards, Automobile Graveyards and Automobile Recycling Businesses".

The language of this bill can be



found at <http://www.state.me.us/dep/rwm/autorecyclers/index.htm>, or by calling Enid Mitnik at 287-8556.

This bill makes a number of changes to current State law, including:

- revises definition of "automobile graveyard" to include outdoor areas used to store 3 or more un-registered or uninspected vehicles;
- requires the Secretary of State's office to provide written notice of their license decisions to the Code Enforcement Officer or other designee in the affected municipality;
- establishes a 300 foot setback requirement from most wells, for newly licensed facilities;
- specifically references municipal authority to enact ordinances that include, among other things, DEP's best management practices for automobile graveyards and recycling businesses;
- requires removal of vehicles or "junk" within 180 days if a permit is denied or revoked, unless an alternative schedule is specifically approved by the municipal officers;
- establishes provisions that authorize municipal action to abate sites and recover costs through civil action, lien, or special tax.

Crusher Operators to Attend Training in June, 2003

Scheduled for June 23, 2003, the Maine Department of Environmental Protection will join with Prolerized New England to offer training for anyone who operates a crusher in Maine to crush a motor vehicle. Training will include proper fluids management, and new DOT requirements. Notices for the training were sent in the mail in early June. If you would like more information on this training, please contact Enid Mitnik at the Maine DEP at (207)287-8556 or at Enid.Mitnik@maine.gov.

Send Comments on Mercury Switch Removal Program to DEP

On January 1, 2004, the Automotive Mercury Switch Removal Program staff will have to present a written report to the Legislature covering how the Automotive Mercury Switch Removal program is going.

Along with information from WESCO on how many switches have been turned in, and information generated from our site visits, the DEP would like to hear from the end-of-life facilities about how well you feel the program is running.

Give us your comments-what is working and what is not. We would like to have some feedback by the end of August. Information can be signed or sent anonymously to:

Enid J. Mitnik
Automotive Mercury Switch
Removal Program
Maine DEP
17 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333-0017

Please send us your comments!

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Look Inside for Important Auto Recycler's News

- Make some **green money!**
- Updates on new law
- Get hassle **free** assistance
- Lawsuit pending



Schedule a Site Visit

Enid Mitnik (Mercury Program) and Roy Krout (Small Business Assistance Program) are visiting automotive and scrap metal recycling businesses to provide on site assistance. With our new mercury switch collection program in full swing and businesses becoming used to these new requirements, our DEP staff are visiting auto recyclers and scrap metal recycling businesses to provide assistance and answer questions. We can give your business a mercury switch collection bucket, labels, written guidance manual and other best management practices *free of charge* as part of our assistance.

If you have questions, and would like us to visit your business at a particular time, please contact our **Small Business Assistance Program (1-800-789-9802)** or Mercury Program **(287-8556)**. We are continuing to schedule these services through the summer. Give us a call and volunteer for this free service.