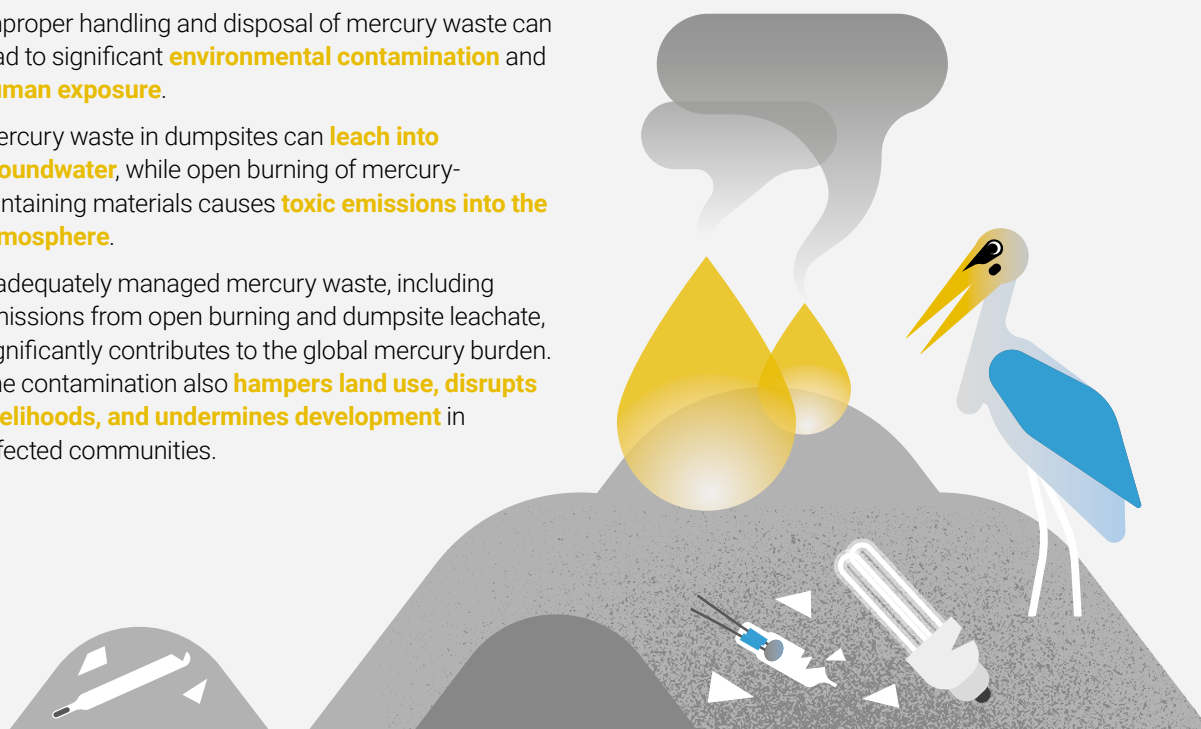


MERCURY WASTE



- ▶ Improper handling and disposal of mercury waste can lead to significant **environmental contamination** and **human exposure**.
- ▶ Mercury waste in dumpsites can **leach into groundwater**, while open burning of mercury-containing materials causes **toxic emissions into the atmosphere**.
- ▶ Inadequately managed mercury waste, including emissions from open burning and dumpsite leachate, significantly contributes to the global mercury burden. The contamination also **hampers land use, disrupts livelihoods, and undermines development** in affected communities.



- ▶ One of the key challenges in mercury waste management is **preventing the re-use or illegal trade of mercury waste**, which can undermine global efforts to phase out mercury use. The Convention mandates that mercury waste be disposed of in a manner that prevents its reintroduction into commerce.





WHAT THE CONVENTION SAYS

The Minamata Convention on Mercury requires Parties to manage mercury waste in an environmentally sound manner in accordance with guidelines on environmentally sound disposal. **Article 11(3)(c)** also restricts the recovery of mercury and transport of mercury waste across international boundaries. This includes:

- **Collecting and separating mercury-added products** at the end of the product's life.
- **Avoiding burning or incineration of mercury waste** and properly managing the landfill sites.
- **Special treatment of mercury** or mercury compounds that have become waste.
- **Applying regulations** to prevent the reintroduction of mercury waste into the market
- Implementing measures aligned with technical guidelines adopted under the **Basel Convention**.

At COP-5, Parties agreed on a threshold of **15 mg/kg total mercury concentration** to identify wastes contaminated with mercury or its compounds, ensuring that materials exceeding this concentration are subject to stringent controls to prevent environmental contamination and protect public health.

WHAT WE DO

- ▶ Parties are working to **ensure special management of mercury that has become waste**, including stabilization and solidification to prevent mercury release to the environment.
- ▶ Parties are **establishing regulatory frameworks and physical infrastructure** for the secure collection, storage, transport, and disposal of mercury waste.
- ▶ Parties are also conducting **public awareness campaigns and training programs** for industries, waste handlers, and consumers on the risks of mercury and best practices for site management.
- ▶ Parties are **enforcing restrictions** to ensure mercury waste is not reused or illegally traded, and promoting transparency and traceability in waste management.
- ▶ Parties are **sharing information on national waste management systems** and transboundary movement of mercury waste.

REFERENCES

- [Minamata Convention text and annexes](#)
- [Basel Convention on mercury wastes](#)
- [Basel Convention Technical Guidelines](#)
- [Minamata Online on mercury waste](#)
- [Global Mercury Assessment 2018](#)
- [Global Mercury Partnership Waste Management Area](#)
- [Global Mercury Waste Assessment](#)
- [UNEP Practical Sourcebook](#)

MINAMATA CONVENTION ON MERCURY

The Minamata Convention on Mercury is a global treaty that helps countries to control, reduce and eliminate mercury across all its life-stages with the objective to protect human health and the environment.

It is named after the bay in Japan where, in the mid-20th century, mercury-tainted industrial wastewater poisoned thousands of people, leading to severe health damage that became known as the "Minamata disease".

Since it entered into force on 16 August 2017, Parties have been working together to control the mercury supply and trade, reduce the use, emissions and releases of mercury, raise public awareness, and build the necessary institutional capacity.

Minamata Convention website
<https://minamataconvention.org>

