Appliance Mercury Switch Removal FAQ

FAQ

**What appliances might have a mercury switch?**

Mercury switches can be found in large appliances, including but not limited to, a washing machine, clothes dryer, hot water heater, dehumidifier, conventional oven, microwave oven, stove, refrigerator, freezer, air-conditioner, trash compactor, or furnace. Major appliances are also referred to as "white goods".

**What types of switches are found in large appliances?**

Two types of mercury switches may be found in large appliances. 1) "Tilt", or "positional", switches measure movement. The mercury moving inside the switch responds to changes of position and will either complete or break an electrical circuit to turn an appliance (or its light) on or off. 2) Several types of gas-fired appliances that have pilot lights may have mercury-containing flame sensors or temperature probes including:

* ranges
* ovens
* clothes dryers
* water heaters
* furnaces
* space heaters

Some non-mercury flame sensors have been used in these appliances, but you should treat all sensors as if they contain mercury, unless you are certain they don't.

**Alternatives Available**

Newer model appliances use an electronic igniter or electronic flame sensor. If there is no available electricity to the appliance such as in recreational vehicles and residences without electricity, there may be no non-mercury alternative at this time.

**Are there other resources available to help identify these switches?**

Documents helpful for identifying mercury-containing appliance switches are available on the DEQ website: [www.deq.louisiana.gov/](http://www.deq.louisiana.gov/)