

# Guidance for New Jersey Schools: Evaluating Mercury in Synthetic Flooring

The New Jersey Department of Health is providing this fact sheet to New Jersey school districts concerned about mercury exposure from synthetic flooring.

## What types of floors contain mercury?

The types of floors that may contain mercury are solid, rubber-like synthetic flooring manufactured from about 1960 until the 1990s. Not all synthetic flooring contains mercury. Flooring made using a catalyst known as “phenyl mercuric acetate” may release mercury vapors into the air under certain conditions. Not all flooring that contains mercury emit mercury vapors into the air.

## What should you do if your school has a synthetic floor?

- Check to see if you can determine if the flooring contains mercury by contacting the manufacturer/installer or reviewing the Safety Data Sheet (SDS).
- If you are able to determine that the flooring contains mercury or you suspect it contains mercury, work with a qualified environmental consultant to evaluate the flooring and determine next steps.
- If indoor air sampling is recommended, it should be done under normal school operating conditions.

## What levels of mercury are considered safe for school children and staff?

The New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) has adopted Standards for Indoor Environment Certification and for Licensure of Indoor Environmental Consultants (N.J.A.C. 8:50). These regulations provide a risk assessment model that can be used to evaluate indoor air contaminants for school children and staff. Your indoor environmental consultant can use this risk model to determine a Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) for mercury in your school. Alternatively, your consultant may evaluate the indoor air data to ensure that mercury levels are below  $0.8\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$  which is based on the exposure scenario in the risk model that is protective of preschool-aged children.

N.J.A.C. 8:50 is available on the NJDOH website at:  
[http://www.nj.gov/health/ceohs/documents/eohap/njac\\_850\\_adoption.pdf](http://www.nj.gov/health/ceohs/documents/eohap/njac_850_adoption.pdf)



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