

## Taiwan moves to ban thermometers with mercury

**Publication:** Taipei Times

**Publication Date:** Oct-23-2007

By Chung Li-hua STAFF REPORTER Tuesday, Oct 23, 2007, Page 4

The Environmental Protection Administration (EPA) wants to ban mercury thermometers with the goal of phasing them out completely and replacing them with electronic thermometers.

The draft regulations for the import and sales of mercury thermometers also states that the ban would be executed in stages starting in July. Domestic and non-medical use would be banned first. The EPA expects the ban would extend to medical establishments by 2011.

The EPA said in a statement that mercury is a toxic compound that accumulates in the body. Careless use of mercury thermometers not only results in environmental pollution, but is also detrimental to human health.

Since electronic thermometers have become widely available, many countries have introduced regulations concerning the usage of mercury thermometers, the EPA said.

Sweden has completely banned the manufacture, import and export of mercury thermometers. Similarly, last November the EU opened discussion on prohibiting all mercury-containing medical equipment, it said.

EPA statistics showed that Taiwan currently uses 527,000 mercury thermometers annually.

With each thermometer containing 1.2g of mercury, this translates into 632kg of mercury in circulation per year, the equivalent of 52.7 million florescent light tubes. The new regulation would effectively reduce mercury-related waste products, the statement said.

Starting in July, importers would be no longer be allowed to to import mercury thermometers. Similarly, retailers would not be allowed to sell them.

For those who still possess warehouse stock, the draft would give them until July 2011 to sell them to medical establishments. The draft also leaves open the possibility of prohibiting medical establishments from whole-saling, retailing or giving out the thermometers.

Should importers or retailers violate these regulations, they could face fines from NT\$60,000 to NT\$300,000 (US\$1,840 to US\$9,200), the draft said.

Mercury manometers are not included in the ban. The EPA said that although each manometer contains 50g to 60g of mercury, they are accurate and not easily breakable.

As electronic manometers cannot yet completely replace the traditional ones, they will not be banned, the EPA said.

[Click here to go to source web site](#)

**NOTICE: In accordance with Title 17 U.S.C. Section 107, this material is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving this information for research and educational purposes.**