



South Jordan Mercury Emergency Response Site Update

USEPA Region 8

November 3, 2022

WEBSITE

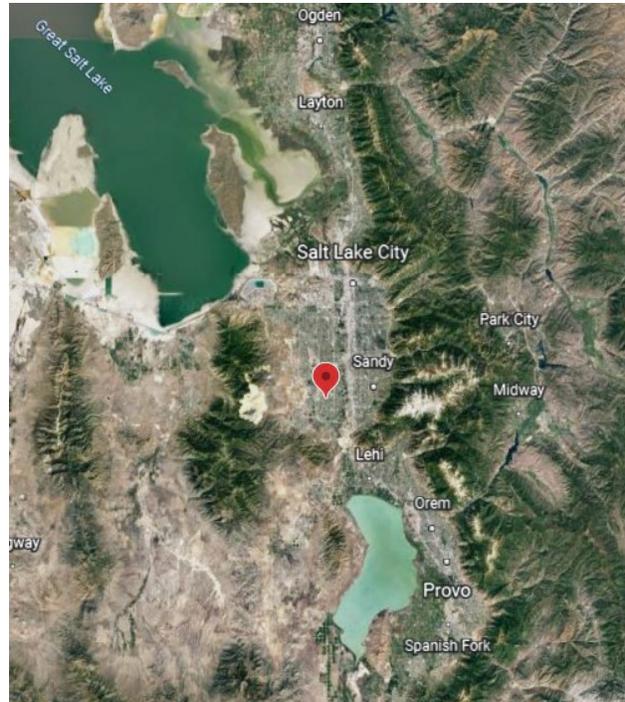
EPA [South Jordan Mercury](#) Response webpage

SITE DESCRIPTION

A homeowner was going through the belongings of an ill family member when they discovered a small jar of elemental mercury. The homeowner moved the jar to his garage in South Jordan (a suburb of Salt Lake City, Utah) and placed it atop a tall sturdy cabinet until he could identify a proper hazardous waste facility. On approximately October 23, 2022, children playing in the garage dislodged and broke the container spreading tiny beads of mercury throughout the garage. The playtime incident was not discovered by their parents until approximately one week later.

On October 31, 2022, the Fire Department responded to the residence, secured a pool of mercury at the immediate spill location, and collected indoor air readings as high as 10,000ng/m³ (nanograms per cubic meter) in the residence and 29,000 ng/m³ in the garage.

The Salt Lake County Health Department requested assistance from EPA and an EPA Response Team mobilized to the home on November 1, 2022.



SAFETY MESSAGE

Indoor air quality inside the residence and the garage do exceed EPA [guidance](#). The family has relocated to a nearby hotel.

EPA has deployed a skilled Response Team who will be working in Tyvek suits and respirators for their own protection. Air quality readings surrounding the home have not exceed background levels. EPA will continue to monitor air quality around the property.

SITE OBJECTIVES

- Collect all elemental mercury that can be identified in the garage and home.
- Use mercury cleaning agents to reduce any trace of mercury from hard living surfaces.
- Clean drain traps and remove carpeting throughout the residence.
- Screen clothing and personal belongings. Ventilate belongings in a heated environment as necessary and to the extent practical. Document and dispose of personal belongings that cannot be cleared for future use.
- Conduct 8-hr clearance monitoring.



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OPERATIONS PERIOD OBJECTIVES

1. Continue removing elemental mercury and addressing contaminated items in the garage.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

EPA's Response Team continued to use a mercury-specific vacuum to collect visible beads of mercury from the floor of the garage as well as from household items in the garage. After the beads of mercury are removed, the items in the garage are photographed, inserted into large plastic bags, heated to the extent practical and then the air in the bags is screened with an instrument to determine levels of mercury. In consultation with the property owner, those items with mercury levels determined by the OSC to be too high to be salvaged are placed in a covered and secure dumpster for disposal. Items that can be salvaged are segregated for heat/vent treatments and further testing. Specific items of value and some items that can be cleaned with mercury cleaning agents are also segregated for additional treatment and testing.

Most items in the garage were determined to be unsalvageable.

Several items of clothing were removed from the home, processed with heat/vent treatments, successfully tested and returned to the family.

PLANNED ACTIVITIES

EPA's Response Team plans to finish gross decontamination of the garage and then move to the next most contaminated area which is a storage room in the basement.

The Team will begin cycles of heating the property with a trailered heating unit followed by venting the property with carbon filtered fans to bring down levels of mercury in the ambient indoor air. Lowering the ambient air levels of mercury will help EPA identify hot spots and get the family back into their home.