



South Jordan Mercury Emergency Response Site Update

USEPA Region 8 November 4-6, 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.

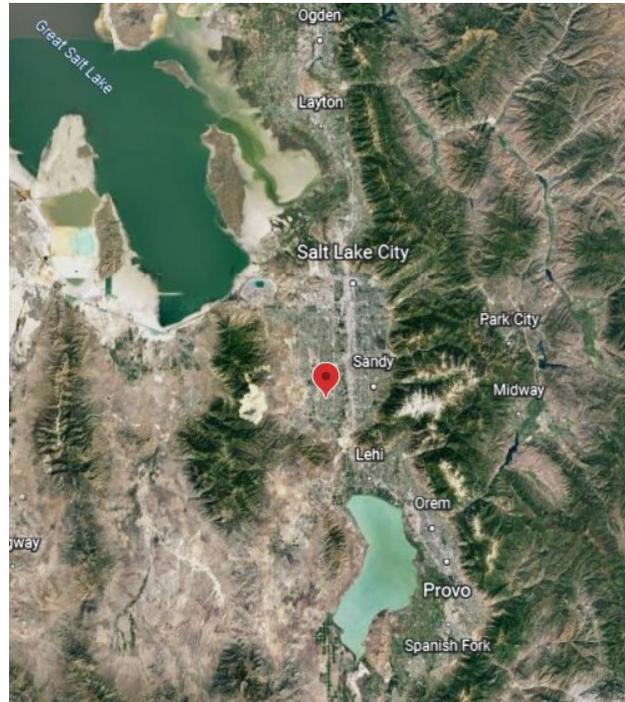
SAFETY MESSAGE

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

EPA has deployed a 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. Process, test and release household items to family as necessary.
2. Complete gross decontamination of garage.
3. Perform detailed assessment of conditions in the home.
4. Begin gross decontamination of the home.
5. Screen the home and cars of visitors and places the family visited where mercury may have been tracked.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

EPA's Response Team continued to remove items required by the family during their relocation. These items were processed with heat/vent treatments, successfully tested and returned to the homeowners.

The Team sorted through all items in the garage and collected visible beads of mercury as they were encountered. The majority of these items were determined to be too high to be salvaged and were prepared for disposal. A mercury cleaning agent was used on the floor of the garage before the Team performed numerous cycles of heating and venting to lower levels of mercury in the ambient air of the garage.

The crew covered all the floors in the home as well as all the moveable objects (furniture, laundry bins, etc) in contact with these floors with plastic sheeting. They cut through this plastic sheeting in numerous locations to obtain accurate mercury readings and used this data to identify contaminated household objects and materials to be removed.



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The Response Team completed a gross decontamination of a storage room in the basement. This room was a location used by the children for hide and seek after they broke the jar of mercury in the garage. The Team also removed all the carpeting in the home.

EPA screened three cars and one home that could have been secondarily contaminated. No levels of concern were detected. The Salt Lake County Health Department determined that the screening of a second home was not required. **EPA recommends and will screen any homes and cars where the mercury from this incident may have been tracked.**

PLANNED ACTIVITIES

EPA's Response Team will use a mercury cleaning agent to decontaminate the floors and accessible HVAC ducts of the home. The Team will then perform multiple cycles of heating and venting in the residence and HVAC system before initiating clearance sampling.