



# Department of Environmental Protection

One Winter Street Boston, MA 02108 • 617-292-5500

Charles D. Baker  
Governor

Karyn E. Polito  
Lieutenant Governor

Kathleen A. Theoharides  
Secretary

Martin Suuberg  
Commissioner

**To:** Clerks of the Senate and House of Representatives and Co-Chairs of the Joint Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture

**From:** Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection

**Subject:** Mercury Thermostat Recycling Corporation (TRC) 2019 Mercury Thermostat Report

**Date:** November 3, 2020

Pursuant to the 2014 legislative revisions to [Chapter 21H, Section 6J½](#), Subsection (g), the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) shall collect and maintain data on the collection and recycling programs established in Subsection (d), including the number of mercury-added thermostats collected and recycled and the number of wholesalers, retailers, qualified contractors and local government authorities participating in the program. On or before September 30 of each year, the Department shall prepare an annual report detailing the data collected under this subsection during the prior calendar year and shall file copies of those reports with the Clerks of the Senate and House of Representatives and the Co-Chairs of the Joint Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture.

Subsection (e) of Section 6J½ states that each thermostat manufacturer that has distributed, offered for final sale, or sold at final sale, any mercury-added thermostat within the Commonwealth, shall individually or collectively, submit an annual report to the Department, that includes the following information:

- The number of mercury-added thermostats collected and recycled by the manufacturer under this section during the previous calendar year;
- The estimated total amount of mercury contained in the thermostat components collected by the manufacturer under this section in the previous calendar year;
- An evaluation of the effectiveness of the manufacturer's collection program;
- An accounting of the administrative costs incurred during the course of administering the collection and recycling program; and
- A list of all locations to which collection containers have been provided, including any locations which received containers during the year, and the date on which each location received a collection container.

Attached is the 2019 annual report of the Mercury Thermostat Recycling Corporation (TRC). A copy of this report is also posted on TRC's website and linked to on the [Department's website](#) under "[Mercury Recycling Corp. Annual State Reports \(including Massachusetts\)](#)".

TRC is a non-profit organization whose goal is to keep mercury in thermostats out of the waste stream by managing the collection and proper disposal of mercury-containing thermostats. The organization is currently comprised of 30 manufacturers that support the program.

The report includes an update of the thermostat collection and recycling data collected by TRC, an accounting of the program expenses, outreach strategies developed, and an overview of other states' collection and recycling programs. Also included in the report were methods for improving the program in Massachusetts.

Below are some highlights of the program in 2019:

- The program collected 98.4 pounds of mercury in Massachusetts. This was similar to the 98 pounds of mercury collected in 2018. Since 2014, the annual quantity of mercury collected in Massachusetts averaged 69.9 pounds;
- The program collected 13,114 whole thermostats in 2019; a 6% decrease from 2018 collections. Since 2014, the annual average number of thermostats collected is 9,130;
- In addition, 1,247 loose switches were collected, bringing the total number of "thermostat equivalents" returned in 2019 to 14,151, a decrease of 3% from 2018;
- The number of whole thermostats collected per collection container or bin in 2019 was 75 thermostats, a decrease from 78 collected in 2018;
- The counties with the most bins and thermostats returned in 2019 were Middlesex County (59 bins, 4,740 thermostats), Norfolk County (43 bins, 4,205 thermostats), and Barnstable County (15 bins, 1,331 thermostats). In 2019, 27% of the partner locations returned at least one bin compared to a national average of 17%;
- In general, the number of bins returned in Massachusetts has increased from 2014 to 2019;
- In Massachusetts, most thermostats were collected through contractors (65.5%);
- In 2019, 27% of the locations in Massachusetts returned at least one bin, compared to a national average of 17%;
- In 2019, the top partners of total numbers of bins and thermostats returned were:
  - Wheelabrator
  - Covanta SEMASS
  - Johnstone Supply
  - F.W. Webb
  - Bell Simons
  - Watsco
  - American Installations
  - The Portland Group
  - Plumbers' Supply Company
  - Homeserve USA Energy Services

All the collection locations are listed in the report's appendices at [https://www.thermostat-recycle.org/files/mediacenter/2019\\_Annual\\_Report\\_MA\\_with\\_appendices.pdf](https://www.thermostat-recycle.org/files/mediacenter/2019_Annual_Report_MA_with_appendices.pdf). These collection locations are also listed on MassDEP's website as part of a broader mercury products collection point listing at <https://www.mass.gov/guides/massdep-mercury-information#handling-mercury-safely->.

The program reported \$62,697.83 in expenses in 2019, an increase of 6% from 2018.

The 2019 education and outreach program involved direct marketing, including phone calls to collection locations, reminder postcards, emails, and numerous site visits. In 2019, TRC also refined its approach on how to engage the Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) industry, the Utilities and Waste Management and Remediation sectors.

For calendar year 2020, TRC plans to focus on:

- Continuing to fulfill state statutory requirements, agreements, and other arrangements for regulatory compliance;
- Targeting mercury thermostat collections at Utilities, the HVAC industries, and other key sectors, and;
- Education and awareness tactics geared toward tech schools, post-secondary and technical reference manuals.