



CPWR – The Center for  
Construction Research  
and Training

Building & Construction  
Trades Department,  
AFL-CIO

Duke University  
Medical Center

University of Cincinnati  
Medical Center

Zenith American Solutions

Serving Construction  
Workers from the  
following DOE sites:

Amchitka

Argonne-West

Ashtabula

Battelle Labs – King Ave.

Battelle Labs –  
West Jefferson

Brookhaven  
National Laboratory

Brush Luckey

Fernald

G.E. Evendale

Hanford

Huntington Pilot Plant

INL

Kansas City Plant

Mallinckrodt

Mound

National Energy Tech  
Laboratory

Oak Ridge

Paducah

Pinellas

Piqua

Portsmouth

Rocky Flats

Savannah River Site

Shippingport

Waste Isolation Pilot Plant

Weldon Spring

Yucca Mountain

## Building Trades National Medical Screening Program

P.O. Box 900960 ▪ Seattle, WA 98109 ▪ 1-800-866-9663 

### MERCURY

#### What is mercury?

Mercury is a silver-colored liquid metal. It can conduct electricity and can be used to measure temperature and pressure. It has been used in many household and commercial products, such as thermometers, barometers, and electrical equipment. Mercury can be combined with other elements such as chlorine or sulfur to form solid compounds.

Mercury is very toxic. It can cause many different health problems. Mercury can damage the brain and the nervous system, as well as kidneys and lungs.

Workers can breathe in mercury as a dust, fume, or vapor suspended in the air. Workers can swallow mercury if they have it on their hands when they smoke, eat, or drink. Mercury also can get into the body through the skin.

#### What is the purpose of this medical exam?

Your screening interview showed that you may have been exposed to mercury at work. Checking your health will help us decide whether you need treatment or more tests.

#### What are we looking for in this exam?

We are looking carefully for signs of nervous system damage, such as memory loss, mood changes, and loss of muscle control. In cases of severe long-term exposure, mercury can cause *peripheral neuropathy*. This type of severe nerve damage causes numbness or loss of control over hands and feet.

You will receive a letter summarizing your exam and photocopies of your test results. All your results are confidential, as defined in your Consent Statement.

#### What if my test results are positive?

If the tests show that you have symptoms of nerve or brain damage or other possible health problems, you will be referred to your doctor or specialist. You will be advised of the type of tests or treatment you need.

#### What other steps should I take?

If you work around materials containing mercury, follow all available precautions and use the protective equipment provided to you. Practice good personal hygiene, such as washing your hands thoroughly, to prevent mercury from getting on your skin, clothing, or food.

Get regular medical check-ups.

#### What if I have more questions?

If you have questions after this exam, ask your personal physician. Or call our toll-free number at 1-800-866-9663. We will refer you to a professional who can answer your questions.