

MEDIA RELEASE
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For Immediate Release



Bring Old Medications, Mercury Thermometers and Thermostats to August 7 Collection Event

OCRRA, Covanta and Thermostat Recycling Corporation host free event for Onondaga County residents to protect children and the environment; Covanta offers \$10 Lowe's gift card for mercury item drop off

SYRACUSE, N.Y., July 27, 2017 –Onondaga County residents are invited to the Mercury and Medication Drop-Off Event on Monday, August 7 from 7:30 am until 10:30 am at the [Rock Cut Road Transfer Station](#) (5808 Rock Cut Road, Jamesville, NY 13078).

This free event is designed to safely dispose of household prescription drugs, over-the-counter medications, mercury thermometers and mercury thermostats.*

“Clean out your medicine cabinets and safely get rid of old mercury-containing thermometers and thermostats at the Mercury and Medication Drop-Off event,” said Dereth Glance, OCRRA executive director. “Mercury harms people and wildlife and needs to be properly disposed. Old medications languishing in medicine cabinets provide a gateway to addiction problems and harm water quality if flushed down the drain. Do your part for the environment and our youth by removing old medicines and toxic mercury from your home.”

Mercury is commonly found in old thermometers and thermostats. When exposed to air mercury escapes into the environment exposing humans to nervous system damage. Mercury containing thermometers have silver, grey or black filling in their tubes. Thermometers with any other color filling do not contain mercury and should be thrown out. Mercury containing thermostats have levers or dials that must be physically moved to change temperature, as well as glass tubes filled with a silver substance behind the faceplate. Newer programmable thermostats do not contain mercury and should be thrown out.



Dispose of mercury thermometers and thermostats as well as old prescription and over-the-counter medication on Monday, August 7 from 7:30 am to 10:30 am at the Rock Cut Road Transfer Station in Jamesville.

Covanta is sponsoring replacement digital thermometers for each mercury thermometer brought in, as well as \$10 gift cards for each resident that brings mercury thermostats or thermometers to the event. A gift card is not issued for medication or non-mercury containing items.†

“We are excited to partner with OCRRA and TRC to recognize the outstanding efforts of Onondaga County residents to remove mercury from the waste stream,” said Kathleen Carroll, Covanta Onondaga client-waste solutions manager. “It is our hope that the reward program will encourage more residents to participate,”

The Thermostat Recycling Corporation will buy 500 lbs. of carbon off-sets for every mercury thermostat returned. This will not only cover the environmental costs of driving a car to the event, but will also cover above and beyond to make sure the event recovers more carbon than it uses.

“We continue to see great value in partnering with Covanta and OCRRA on events like this,” said Ryan Kiscaden, TRC’s executive director. “It serves as a springboard to communicate the ease of using our mercury thermostat recycling program, and the importance of participating in it.”

To help attendees move quickly through the event, those dropping off mercury thermometers or thermostats must complete a short form beforehand and place it on their dash the day of the event. The form can be downloaded at www.OCRRA.org (www.ocrra.org/events/mercury-and-medication-drop-off-event/). No form is necessary if only dropping off medication.

No trash or recyclables will be accepted at the Rock Cut Road Drop-Off Site, which is closed for normal business on August 7, 2017.

Year-Round Disposal Options:

Residents unable to attend the event have year-round disposal options for medications and mercury items. Mercury thermostats and thermometers may be dropped off at **OCRRA’s Rock Cut Road Transfer Station**, year-round Tuesday-Saturday from 7:00 am to 2:30 pm. Residents will receive a \$5 Lowe’s gift card in the mail, courtesy of Covanta.

Do NOT dispose of prescription and over-the-counter medications down the drain (sink or toilet) as they can upset waste water treatment plant operation. Most treatment plants do not have the capacity to filter out or treat certain items (hormone medications, chemotherapy drugs, antibiotics, etc.) Ultimately, this negatively impacts wildlife populations (e.g., fish infertility).

Old medicines should go in the trash at other times of the year. OCRRA recommends disguising medication to prevent someone from taking it out of the trash and consuming it. Mix pills or liquid medication with coffee grounds or rotting food. All household trash in Onondaga County is burned at high temperatures at the Waste-to-Energy Facility, which is the same end that medication meets when dropped off at collection events. In addition, residents may bring old medications to designated drop off locations in Onondaga County. Visit www.upstate.edu/poison/pdf/snadd-poster.pdf for details.

* No sharps, needles or lancets will be accepted at the event. To properly manage these items, visit: www.ocrra.org/how-do-i-get-rid-of/sharps/. When dropping off prescription medication, it is important to black out the name and address on the label. However, leave the medication name and dosage information.

Broken or leaking thermometers and thermostats will not be accepted at the event. To make a no-cost household toxics disposal appointment to get rid of those items safely, visit www.ocrra.org/services/dispose/household-toxics-drop-off/ for details.

† One gift card per resident drop-off, regardless of the number of mercury items turned in. Gift cards are only issued for mercury item drop off, not medication drop off.

About OCRRA: *OCRRA is a not-for-profit public benefit corporation created by the New York State Legislature in 1990 to deliver a comprehensive solid waste management and resource recovery system to Onondaga County residents.*

OCRRA's system includes: a strong recycling and composting program, a foundation for local waste disposal at the Waste-to-Energy Facility, two convenient trash and recycling drop off sites, a robust education component and programs for hard to manage materials, such as household hazardous waste, batteries, fluorescent bulbs and other mercury-containing devices.

OCRRA's award-winning programs are funded by trash drop-off fees and the sale of electricity generated at the Waste-to-Energy Facility in Jamesville, NY. Learn more and get involved at www.OCRRA.org, or follow us on [Facebook](#).

About Covanta Onondaga: *Covanta Onondaga operates the Onondaga County Resource Recovery Facility, which serves Onondaga County and the greater Syracuse region with sustainable waste disposal, processing approximately 990 tons of municipal solid waste per day into more than 39 megawatts of clean, renewable electricity. The facility also recycles approximately 12,000 tons of metal annually – enough to build 10,000 automobiles. For more information, visit covanta.com.*

About Thermostat Recycling Corporation: *Thermostat Recycling Corporation (TRC) was founded in 1998 as an industry-funded nonprofit. Membership consists of 31 manufacturers who either branded and sold mercury thermostats in the U.S. prior to their discontinuation in 2007, or produced devices that may replace mercury-containing thermostats.*

With a network of more than 3,000 collection sites nationwide, TRC has recovered over 2.1 million thermostats, or 10 tons of mercury, to date. All costs to transport and properly dispose of recovered thermostats are assumed by TRC. Visit thermostat-recycle.org to learn more and find a recycling location near you.

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