

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS  
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:14  
ANSWERED ON:01.08.2011  
MERCURY SPILLS  
Muttemwar Shri Vilas Baburao

**Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:**

- (a) whether the mercury level in the water and air of Delhi is continuously increasing leading to adverse impact on the kidney and neuro system of the citizens;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Government had issued an order in the year 2010 prohibiting use of medical instruments containing mercury by the hospitals;
- (d) if so, the details thereof including the policy of collection and disposal of the mercury spills;
- (e) whether the general public is educated about the collection of mercury spills and if not, the reasons therefor; and
- (f) the mechanism/system for storage of mercury being followed at present in the country including Delhi?

**Answer**

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) FOR ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN)

(a) to (f): A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (f) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 14 FOR 01.08.2011 REGARDING MERCURY SPILLS BY SHRI VILAS MUTTEMWAR.

(a) to (f): Mercury is not included in the notified ambient air quality standards. Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) has not monitored levels of mercury in ambient air and water in Delhi.

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare have issued guidelines in March 2010 to reduce environmental pollution due to mercury in Central Government Hospitals and Health Centres. Under these Guidelines, all Central Government Hospitals and health centers have been asked to gradually phase out mercury containing equipments (thermometer, BP Instruments etc.) and replace them with good quality non-mercury equipments. The guidelines also require that a mercury phase-out plan be developed and procurement of mercury-free equipment may be started. The hospitals have also been given detailed guidelines regarding proper management of mercury waste and mercury spills.

Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC) has directed hospitals in Delhi having 50 beds or more to phase out mercury based equipments. DPCC has directed all Health Care Facilities (HCFs) to dispose of mercury waste only through agencies notified by DPCC.

CPCB has prepared draft Guidelines on "Environmentally Sound Management of Mercury Waste in Health Care Facilities" which specify mercury spill collection procedure, storage and disposal options as well as alternatives to mercury based medical instruments. These guidelines have been widely circulated and also placed on CPCB's website for general public.

Central Pollution Control Board has asked all State Pollution Control Boards (SPCBs)/ Pollution Control Committees (PCCs) to take necessary action for safe management of mercury spillages/losses in healthcare facilities, collection of spilled mercury, its storage and sending it back to the manufacturers. They have been asked to ensure that the spilled mercury does not become part of bio-medical or other solid wastes generated from the healthcare facilities. Further, mercury bearing waste containing equal to or greater than 50 mg/kg of mercury is required to be disposed of as per the Hazardous Waste (Management, Handling and Transboundary Movement) Rules, 2008.

CPCB has also organized awareness workshops for various stakeholders on bio-medical waste management in general and specifically on mercury spill collection, handling and disposal by Health Care Facilities (HCFs).