



CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY NEWS RELEASE

Department of Toxic Substances Control

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Director Commends National Mercury Switch Agreement

SACRAMENTO – Citing the need to reduce mercury pollution in the environment and foster environmental stewardship between private entities, environmentalists, corporations and recyclers, Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) Director, Maureen Gorsen today commended the signing of a Memorandum on Understanding creating a national Mercury Switch Removal Program. The agreement, signed by representatives from vehicle manufacturers, steelmakers, vehicles dismantlers, vehicle shredders, environmental community, U.S. EPA and participating states, provides free collection and transportation of mercury switches from auto dismantlers to mercury recycling facilities - before scrap cars and light trucks are shredded for recycling.

California is represented in the agreement by the Environmental Council of the States (ECOS), a national non-profit, non-partisan association of state and territorial environmental agency leaders.

“This national agreement is consistent with Governor Schwarzenegger’s environmental goals to lead by example and ensure that state government is held accountable for environmental protection to the same extent as private entities. This program will benefit the environment by ensuring safe removal, collection and management of mercury switches found in end of life vehicles. This agreement is a true example of environmental stewardship in action,” said Gorsen.

The agreement, signed in Chicago on Aug. 11, 2006, creates a management system for the automotive, steel and dismantling industries that will be funded by a three year, \$4 million implementation fund by vehicle manufactures and steel makers. The program will also include a vehicle manufacturer’s database to track switch recovery by program participants and help evaluate overall program performance. Mercury recovery goals and programmatic performance are ensured by a commitment by signatories to regularly assess, and work to continuously enhance overall program performance.

In addition, the agreement provides:

- Education and outreach for those removing switches
- Removal, collection and management of switches
- Recordkeeping and accountability of mercury recovery
- Scrap selection and corroboration
- Review and improvement of the NVMSRP

Mercury is a naturally occurring metal which has several forms. Metallic mercury is a shiny, silver-white, odorless liquid. Exposure to mercury occurs from breathing contaminated air, or ingesting contaminated water and food. Mercury, at high levels, may damage the brain, kidneys and developing fetus. Mercury often re-enters the environment from the improper disposal of mercury-containing products.

For more information and to review posters about mercury switches visit DTSC’s Website at www.dtsc.ca.gov.

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The Department of Toxic Substances Control’s mission is to restore, protect, and enhance the environment and ensure public health, environmental quality and economic vitality by regulating hazardous waste, conducting and overseeing cleanups, and developing and promoting pollution prevention.

Hood and trunk lights with mercury switches look like this:

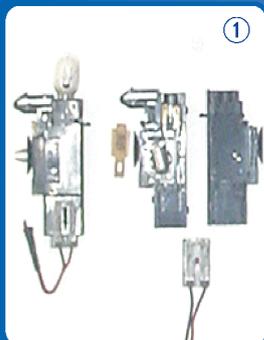
Chrysler/Dodge



GM (General Motors)



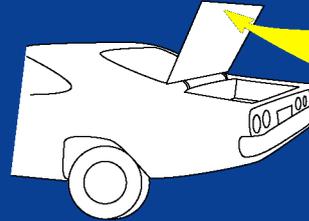
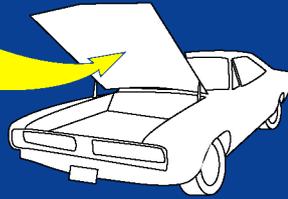
Ford



How to Remove Mercury Switches in Hood and Trunk Lights



Hood light



Trunk light

Chrysler/Dodge



① Remove the light bulb.



② Clip the wire at the base of the light assembly.



③ Push the mercury switch out of the light assembly. The mercury switch will come out through the socket.



① Remove the light bulb.



② Pry the light assembly in half.



③ Remove the mercury switch from its housing.



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Chevrolet Cavalier ('96, '97, '98 models) Mercury Switch for Trunk Light



Trunk light

The mercury switch housing is attached to the trunk hinge.



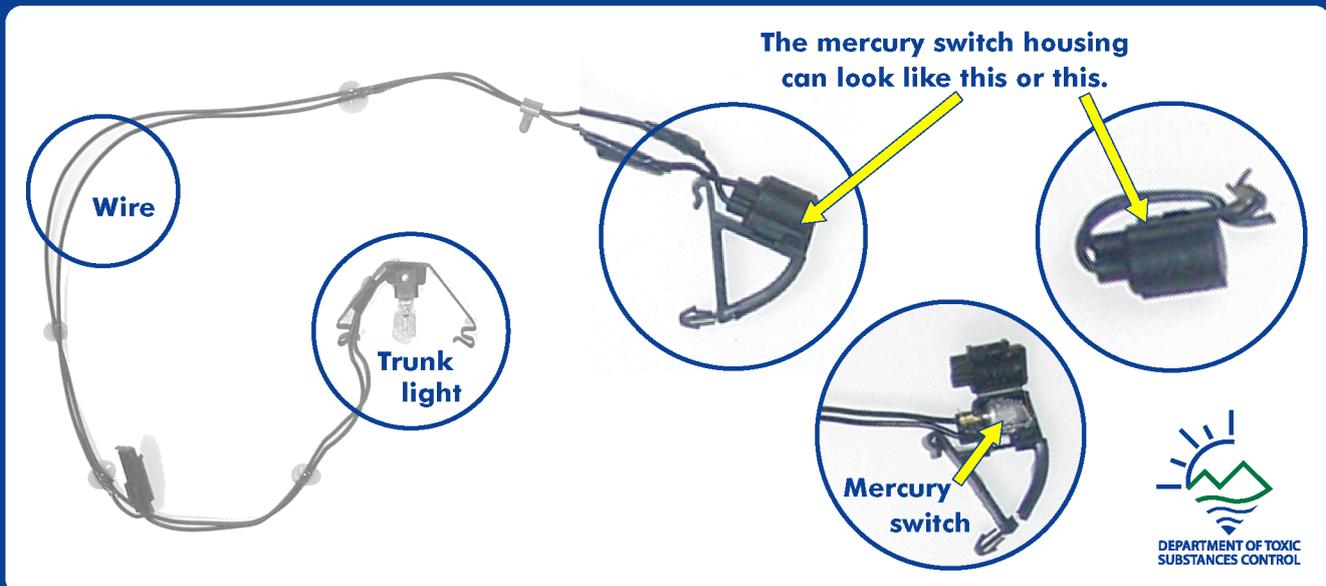
① Locate the mercury switch housing.



② Remove it from the trunk hinge.



③ Disconnect the wire from the mercury switch housing.



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