



**Royal
Pharmaceutical
Society
of Great Britain**

Law and Ethics Bulletin

Restrictions on the sale of products containing mercury

From 3 April 2009 certain measuring devices containing mercury cannot be sold to the general public. This restriction also prevents the supply of any mercury containing measuring devices (such as fertility thermometers) against a prescription.

Mercury sphygmomanometers may still be sold to healthcare professionals but this will be reviewed by 3 October 2009.

These restrictions have been introduced in order to protect the environment and long term public health by reducing the quantity of hazardous mercury waste in the environment.

The devices affected are:

- Mercury containing fever thermometers;
- Other mercury containing measuring devices which are intended for sale to the general public, including sphygmomanometers, and thermometers other than fever thermometers.

Those persons who have already purchased a product before the 3rd April 2009 are not affected and may continue to use their thermometer or measuring device without breaking the law. However no further sales or supplies can be made after 3rd April 2009 and any remaining stock must be withdrawn from sale after this date.

The restrictions do not affect measuring devices which were more than 50 years old on the 3 October 2007, (i.e. those produced before 3rd October 1957).

Other non-medical devices that are also affected by this legislation are:

- (a) manometers; and
- (b) barometers after 3 October 2009 (except barometers which were measuring devices more than 50 years old on 3 October 2007).