



## CREMATORIES & AIR POLLUTION CONTROL

Emissions from crematories have some citizens wondering how these facilities are regulated. Of most concern to many citizens is the mercury emitted from the facilities. Mercury is a naturally occurring element that has many uses, but can also harm human health. Mercury emissions can be emitted from crematories when dental amalgam fillings containing mercury are burned in the facility. Below is a brief explanation of regulations regarding crematories.

### DO CREMATORIES NEED TO OBTAIN AIR PERMITS?

Under Wisconsin Administrative Code, crematories do not need to obtain air permits (construction or operation) if they emit less than ten pounds of mercury each year.

- s. NR 406.04(1)(s) exempts crematories from obtaining air pollution *construction* permits.
- s. NR 407.03(1)(m) exempts crematories from obtaining an air pollution *operation* permit.
- NR 446.03(2)(a) requires facilities, including crematories, to obtain a permit if that facility emits ten pounds or more of mercury annually. Department of Natural Resources (DNR) permits require sources to limit mercury emissions using the best available control technology, also known as BACT.

### HOW LIKELY IS IT THAT A CREMATORY WILL REQUIRE A PERMIT?

It is not likely that a crematory will require a permit, because mercury emissions from a single crematory are expected to be much less than ten pounds per year.

- The [Great Lakes Mercury Emissions Reduction Strategy](#) (December 2010) from the [Great Lakes Regional Collaboration](#) estimates the mercury emissions factor to be 0.0011 pounds per cremation. Using this emissions factor, a crematory would need to complete roughly 9,090 cremations per year (or 25 per day) to meet the ten pounds of mercury emissions required to need a permit.
- The [Wisconsin Deaths 2009 report](#), released in February 2011, by the Wisconsin Department of Health Services states, there were a total of 19,636 cremations in Wisconsin in 2009.
- Based on the low emissions anticipated from each crematory, DNR does not require operators of crematories to test or report their emissions.

### WHAT AIR POLLUTION REGULATIONS APPLY TO CREMATORIES?

Even though no permits are expected to be required there are air pollution rules that apply to crematories. Wisconsin Administrative Codes applicable to crematories relate to objectionable odors, visible exhaust, and particulate matter emissions. If there is concern regarding these regulations, please contact your [local DNR office](#).

- s. NR 429.03 - All sources of air emissions (including crematories) are required to regulate objectionable odors.
- s. NR 431.05 - Visible exhaust at the facility may not exceed 20% opacity. (The higher the opacity the more dense and less transparent the smoke appears. Note: As temperatures drop, steam can look like thick smoke.)
- ss. NR 415.03 and s. NR 404.04 - The facility may not emit quantities of particulate matter that substantially contribute to exceeding an outdoor air quality health standard or create air pollution. Additional information on particulate matter can be found on the [DNR's particle pollution web page](#).

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION

- For more Information on this issue, please contact your [local DNR office](#).
- For more information on mercury, please visit [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov).



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