

PRIMARY METALS FREE

GSA Advantage!® icon:



Environmental Attribute: Toxicity (Free of Cadmium, Lead, Mercury)

Description: The Primary Metals Free (PMF) icon applies to products that use alternatives to cadmium, lead, or mercury. These metals are included on the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) list of [31 Priority Chemicals](#), which identifies metals and chemicals that are potentially harmful to human health and/or the environment. The EPA's Hazardous Waste Minimization Program issued this list as part of an effort to reduce the amount of hazardous chemicals that are found in products (and eventually in wastes) by reducing their use in manufacturing processes.



Most [cadmium](#) used in this country is obtained as a by-product (formed while making something else) from smelting (melting) zinc, lead, or copper ores. The cadmium by-product is mostly used in metal plating and to make pigments, batteries, and plastics.

[Lead](#) has many different uses. It is used in the production of batteries, ammunition, metal products (solder and pipes), and devices to shield X-rays. Because of health concerns, the use of lead in paints and ceramic products, caulking, and pipe solder has been dramatically reduced in recent years.

[Mercury](#) has traditionally been used to make products like thermometers, switches, and some light bulbs. Exposure to mercury can affect the human nervous system and harm the brain, heart, kidneys, lungs, and immune system.

Covered Products: Vendors may choose to select the Primary Metals Free icon for the following products:

Medical & Lab Equipment: thermometers (non-fever), barometers, psychrometers, sphygmomanometers, GI tubes, manometers, hygrometers, hydrometers, flow meters, pyrometers

Paints, Coatings, & Adhesives: paints, primers, paint thinners, adhesives, varnish, enamel, and coatings

Building & Industrial Products: thermometers (non-fever) and thermostats (industrial & manufacturing)

Batteries: rechargeable household batteries

Certification: Vendors self-declare that products do not contain cadmium, mercury, or lead. Vendors may only select this icon for the products listed above. If requested, vendors must be able to substantiate the claim that the product is free of these metals. This can be accomplished through:

- Participation in a federal or state agency sponsored program,
- Verification by an independent organization that specializes in such claims, or
- Possession of competent and reliable evidence.



Summary of Federal Purchasing Requirements: Federal agencies must ensure that 95% of new contract actions for the supply of products and the acquisition of services require that products are sustainable, including non-toxic or less-toxic alternatives.