

For Minimization of Mercury in Wastewater Discharges from Dental Practices

1 Eliminate all use of bulk elemental mercury (also referred to as liquid or raw memory). Any bulk elemental mercury must be recycled or disposed of as hazardous waste.



It must NEVER be placed into the regular trash, placed with infectious waste (red bag) or poured down the drain.

2 Limit the amount of amalgam used to the smallest appropriate size for each restoration. Keep a variety of amalgam capsule sizes on hand to more closely match the amount triturated to the amount needed in the restoration.

3 Install plastic disposable chair side amalgam traps in both the vacuum system and cuspidor of each operatory where restoration work is done. Change these chair-side amalgam traps frequently. Never rinse these traps in the sink.

4 Refrain from using sodium hypochlorite (bleach) to disinfect vacuum lines, because it speeds the release of mercury from amalgam.



5 Change vacuum pump filters and screens at least once per month or as directed by the manufacturer. Carefully seal the vacuum screen in its plastic container, including any water that may be present, and store it in an airtight container with to the amalgam waste.

6 If your practice has a dry turbine vacuum unit, then have a licensed amalgam recycler or hazardous waste disposal service pump out and clean the air-water separator tank at least once per 6 months. Perform this service more frequently if necessary to maintain suction or if so directed by the vacuum system manufacturer.



7 Maintain a written or computerized log of amalgam waste that you generate, and of amalgam waste that you remove from your vacuum system or plumbing. In addition, obtain receipts or other certified documentation from your recycler or hazardous waste hauler of all amalgam waste recycling and disposal shipments that you make. Keep these receipts on file for at least three years, and make them available to authorized City inspectors upon request.

8 Use a licensed hauler for off-site recycling of spent fixer solution or for management as a hazardous waste.



9 Train staff in the proper handling, management, and disposal of mercury-containing material and fixer-containing solutions. Maintain a training log.



10 Have a licensed recycling contractor, mail-in service, or hazardous waste hauler remove your amalgam wastes. Recycling is the preferred method for dealing with amalgam waste. As an alternative, you may have a licensed hazardous waste hauler remove your amalgam waste for disposal. You may also transport small quantities yourself to the Napa County Household Hazardous Waste Facility using the VSQG (“Very Small Quantity Generator”) program.

Amalgam waste includes:

- Non-contact amalgam (scrap);
- Contact amalgam (scrap);
- Contact amalgam (e.g., extracted teeth containing amalgam);
- Amalgam or amalgam sludge captured by chair-side traps, vacuum pump filters, screens, and other devices, including the traps, filters, and screens themselves;
- Used amalgam capsules; and
- Leaking or unusable amalgam capsules.

11 Store amalgam waste in airtight containers. Follow recycler’s or hauler’s instructions, if any, for disinfection of waste and separation of contact and non-contact amalgam. Do not use disinfectant solutions with oxidizers, such as bleach, to disinfect the amalgam. Do not add water or waste fixer to the waste containers.

**Feel free to contact the
City of American Canyon
Environmental Compliance Group
With any questions or concerns at:
707-557-9653**

