

APPENDIX A

Best Management Practices for Dental Amalgam Waste in Canada

Introduction

The aim of these best management practices (BMPs) is to reduce the amount of amalgam waste generated in dental offices (pollution prevention) and to ensure that the waste that is being produced is captured at its source and disposed of appropriately (pollution control).

Disposal and transportation of hazardous waste is regulated under federal, provincial and territorial laws and regulations, and municipal by-laws. Under the law, dentists are responsible for ensuring that they are in compliance with all laws, regulations and by-laws. Dentists have to be aware that local regulatory obligations may impose requirements that go beyond what is set herein.

Pollution prevention

In order to minimize the amount of amalgam waste requiring disposal, dentists should

- purchase pre-capsulated amalgams to avoid using bulk liquid (elemental) mercury and stock amalgam materials in a good choice of capsule sizes in order to better select the right amount of material for a particular restoration;
- avoid stockpiling excessive amounts of amalgam; and
- stay abreast of advances in restorative materials and provide patients with complete information about the benefits and risks associated with the various restorative materials available.

Pollution control

(A) Elemental mercury

Best management practices

- Store unused elemental mercury in a tightly sealed, break-resistant container.
- Label the container "Mercury Waste: Elemental Mercury."
- Contact a carrier for recycling, or proper disposal, or your provincial or territorial environment agency. Please verify with your provincial/territorial/municipal authorities if a certified hazardous waste carrier is required under their legislation.

Other options

- React unused elemental mercury with silver alloy to form amalgam.
- Follow the BMPs for the disposal of non-contact amalgam waste.

Don'ts

- Do not transport elemental mercury yourself.
- Do not place elemental mercury in the garbage.
- Do not wash elemental mercury down the drain.

(B) Non-contact amalgam waste

Non-contact amalgam waste is amalgam waste that has never been in a patient's mouth. It is generally surplus amalgam left after a new restoration has been completed.

Best management practices

- Separate non-contact unused amalgam waste from used amalgam waste.
- Collect non-contact amalgam waste in a break/puncture-resistant, airtight container.
- Label the container "Mercury Waste: Non-contact Amalgam."
- Once the container is full, contact a carrier for recycling, or proper disposal, or your provincial or territorial environment agency. Please verify with your provincial/territorial/ municipal authorities if a certified hazardous waste carrier is required under their legislation.

Don'ts

- Do not throw amalgam into the garbage.
- Do not wash amalgam particles down the drain.
- Do not transport amalgam yourself.
- Do not place non-contact amalgam waste in your sharps container.

(C) Contact amalgam waste

Contact amalgam waste is amalgam that has been in a patient's mouth. If BMPs for non-contact amalgam waste are followed, it should be the only type of amalgam waste that is evacuated through the high-speed suction or the saliva ejector.

Best management practices

- Install an International Organization for Standardization (ISO) certified amalgam separator (ISO 11143) or equivalent and maintain it according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- Use disposable traps and filters in your dental units. Using universal precautions (gloves, glasses and mask), remove the chair-side trap from your dental unit and place the entire trap into a break/puncture-resistant, airtight container labelled "Mercury Waste: Contact Amalgam." Fasten the lid securely onto the container.
- Using universal precautions (gloves, glasses and mask), remove the vacuum pump filter from your dental unit. Fasten the lid securely onto the filter. Label the filter "Mercury Waste: Contact Amalgam."
- Once traps and filters have accumulated, contact a carrier for recycling, or proper disposal, or your provincial or territorial environment agency. Please verify with your provincial/ territorial/municipal authorities if a certified hazardous waste carrier is required under their legislation.

Other options

- Using universal precautions (gloves, glasses and mask), remove chair-side trap vacuum pump filter from the dental unit.
- Remove all visible amalgam by tapping the trap and filter contents into a container labelled "Mercury Waste: Contact Amalgam."
- Close the lid tightly.

- If the trap and filter are visibly clean, throw them into the regular garbage if they are disposable or insert them back into dental unit if reusable.
- If the trap and filter are not visibly clean, they must be placed in a contact amalgam container for pick up by a carrier for recycling or proper disposal, or your provincial or territorial environment agency. Please verify with your provincial/ territorial/municipal authorities if a certified hazardous waste carrier is required under their legislation.

Don'ts

- Do not place contact and non-contact amalgam in the same container.
- Do not place contact amalgam waste in the same container as bio-medical wastes or sharps.
- Do not rinse traps and filters in the sink.
- Do not throw disposal traps that contain amalgam particles into the garbage.
- Do not wipe traps/filters with paper towel or any other material, as this creates additional contaminated waste.

(D) Amalgam capsules

While it is not likely that all mercury is removed from amalgam capsules, provincial and territorial agencies agree that empty amalgam capsules are considered non-hazardous and can be thrown into the regular garbage.