



Mercury/Amalgam Waste Handling Procedures For Dentists



Waste Type	Source	Management Options	Restrictions
Extracted Teeth Containing Amalgam	Dental extractions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Place in the contact amalgam container 2) Recycle through an amalgam recycler 	DO NOT: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Place in the biohazard bag 2) Place in the trash 3) Place in the sharps container
Elemental Mercury	Bulk mercury containers, spills and spill cleanup containers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Always wear nitrile gloves when cleaning up a spill 2) Train staff in spill clean-up procedures 3) Recycle unused bulk mercury through a recycler 4) React small amounts of elemental mercury with amalgam alloy – recycle as scrap metal 	DO NOT: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Rinse down the drain 2) Place in the trash 3) Place in the biohazard bag 4) Place in the sharps container 5) Clean up spills with a vacuum cleaner
Empty Amalgam Capsules	Restorative treatment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Dispose of in the trash 	
Broken or Unusable Amalgam Capsules	Restorative treatment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Collect and store contents with scrap amalgam for recycling 	DO NOT: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Place in the trash 2) Place in the biohazard bag 3) Place in the sharps container
Scrap Amalgam	Traps, screens, excess mix, vacuum pump filters	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Store in labeled containers 2) Send to a recycler 3) Recycle heavily-contaminated traps 4) Recycle vacuum pump filters 	DO NOT: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Place in biohazard bag 2) Rinse down the drain 3) Place in the sharps container 4) Place in the trash 5) Disinfect with any method that uses heat

Thanks to the National Wildlife Federation for permission to reproduce these charts from their booklet “The Environmentally Responsible Dental Office” (see bibliography).