# Mercury/Amalgam Waste Handling Procedures for Dentists

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Waste Type</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Management Options</th>
<th>Restrictions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Extracted Teeth Containing Amalgam  | Dental extractions                    | 1. Place in the contact amalgam container  
2. Recycle through an amalgam recycler                                                                                   | DO NOT:  
• Place in the biohazard bag  
• Place in the trash  
• Place in the sharps container |
| Elemental Mercury                   | Bulk mercury containers, spills and spill cleanup containers | 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:  
• Rinse down the drain  
• Place in the trash  
• Place in the biohazard bag  
• Place in the sharps container  
• Clean up spills with a vacuum cleaner |
| Empty Amalgam Capsules              | Restorative treatment                 | 1. Dispose of in the trash                                                                                           |                                                                                                      |
| Broken or Unusable Amalgam Capsules | Restorative treatment                 | 1. Collect and store contents with scrap amalgam for recycling                                                        | DO NOT:  
• Place in the trash  
• Place in the biohazard bag  
• Place in the sharps container |
| Scrap Amalgam                       | Traps, screens, excess mix, vacuum pump filters | 1. Store in labeled containers  
2. Send to a recycler  
3. Recycle heavily-contaminated traps  
4. Recycle vacuum pump filters                                                                                   | DO NOT:  
• Place in biohazard bag  
• Rinse down the drain  
• Place in the sharps container  
• Place in the trash  
• 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.”