

Best Management Practices for Handling and Recycling Amalgam and Mercury Wastes

Type of Waste	Source	Best Management Practices	STOP!
I. Contact Amalgam (amalgam that has been in contact with the patient)	A. Teeth Containing Amalgam Patient/Extractions B. Scrap Amalgam Patient/Old Fillings Chair-side Traps, Screens C. Amalgam Sludge Vacuum Pump Filters Other Amalgam Capture Devices	Always use personal protective equipment (gloves) when handling contact amalgam. Render teeth containing amalgam noninfectious by chemical means. Store amalgam wastes in separate airtight containers labeled "extracted teeth," "scrap amalgam," "traps," etc. Clean or replace screens, traps, or filters on a regular basis. Clean screens, traps, and filters before cleaning vacuum lines.	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p> Place amalgam waste of any kind in the biohazard (red) bag, the trash, or the sharps container.</p> <p> Rinse traps, filters, or screens over or down the drain or into a wastebasket.</p> <p> Disinfect teeth or any item containing amalgam with any method that uses heat.</p> <p> Use household bleach or other oxidizing cleaner.</p> <p> Decant liquid in which amalgam has been stored down the drain.</p> <p> Rinse tools used to place or carve amalgams over the drain.</p> </div>
II. Non-Contact Amalgam	A. Broken or Unusable Amalgam Capsules, Excess Amalgam, Empty Amalgam Capsules Restorative Treatment	Store amalgam wastes in separate airtight containers labeled "extracted teeth," "scrap amalgam," "traps," etc.	
<p>Recycle ALL Amalgam wastes through an amalgam recycler.</p>			
III. Elemental Mercury	Spills of Bulk Mercury, Broken Thermometers and Blood Pressure Units	Train staff in spill clean-up procedures. Always wear nitrile gloves when cleaning up a spill. Clean up visible mercury with a spill kit. Place contaminated items in a sealable container labeled "bulk mercury waste" and dispose of through a hazardous waste hauler. Recycle unused bulk mercury through an amalgam recycler. Switch to preencapsulated amalgam alloy.	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p> Clean spills with a vacuum cleaner.</p> </div>
IV. Fluorescent Light Bulbs		Recycle through mercury recycler.	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p> Break bulbs or discard in the trash.</p> </div>



For more information about recycling or amalgam separation equipment contact the Massachusetts Dental Society at (800) 342-8747 or the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority at (617) 242-6000.

