

NARRAGANSETT BAY COMMISSION



ENVIRONMENTAL

BEST

MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

for

the Management of Waste Dental Amalgam

The Narragansett Bay Commission (NBC) has developed the following set of Environmental Best Management Practices (BMPs) for the Management of Waste Dental Amalgam to help the dental community safely and economically reduce the amount of mercury released into the environment. Dental facilities serviced by the NBC have two procedural options available to them regarding the proper management and compliant discharge of dental process wastewater to the NBC sewer system.

Dental facilities choosing Option 1 must install, use and maintain an amalgam separator with a separation efficiency of 99% when tested according to ISO 11143 standards and must demonstrate compliance with the "Mandatory" portion of the enclosed BMPs. Dental facilities choosing Option 1 will be excluded from conducting costly end-of-pipe wastewater sampling monitoring requirements.

Dental offices utilizing Option 2 are not required to install an amalgam separator but will be required to implement all other applicable Mandatory BMPs, and will be required to monitor and sample their process wastewater discharges on a regular basis in order to demonstrate continuous compliance with all applicable NBC discharge limits.

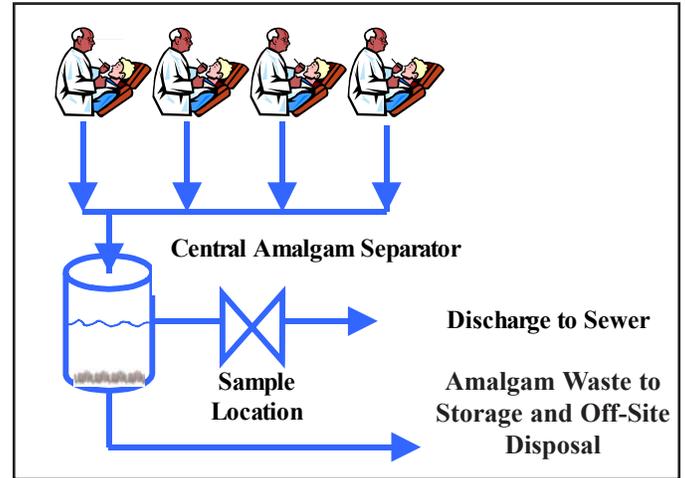
The NBC strongly encourages the use of ISO 11143 certified amalgam separators (Option 1). These separators help to remove most mercury from dental wastewater without being overly burdensome to operate or maintain. Based on NBC's current discharge limit for mercury, as little as 1/10,000 of a gram of amalgam in one gallon of wastewater would place your office in non-compliance resulting in additional sampling and monitoring costs. Continued non-compliance with NBC discharge limits can result in having your name published in the newspaper as being in significant non-compliance and/or the issuance of fines and penalties.



OPTION 1

NBC BMP Implementation with the Installation of an Amalgam Separator

Option 1 is the preferred approach and requires the installation and operation of an amalgam separator and implementation of the attached NBC BMPs. Through Option 1, all amalgam-contaminated wastewater, including wastewaters from cuspidors and vacuum systems, must flow through an amalgam separator and through a sample location prior to sewer discharge.



Typical wastewater plumbing diagram for dental office with an amalgam separator

Specific Requirements for NBC Dental BMP Option

Installation of Amalgam Separator

Amalgam Separators must be ISO 11143 certified and capable of handling flow from vacuum pumps and chair side cuspidors. Separators vary in complexity, capabilities and cost. Here are some criteria that should be considered when selecting an amalgam separator:

1. The vendor of the equipment must be able to provide ISO 11143 documentation certifying that the equipment has been proven capable of removing at least 99% of amalgam during certification tests.
2. There should be minimal loss of suction power within the vacuum system.
3. A system that is low maintenance is preferred over one that requires manual operation and frequent cleaning and/or servicing.
4. The unit should operate quietly.
5. The unit should be centrally installed so as to service a whole office or a series of chairs in order to minimize the cost and maintenance associated with individual units that service only one chair.
6. The unit or units must be capable of handling flow from:
 - a. Vacuum Systems,
 - b. Cuspidors and
 - c. Sinks if applicable.
7. Plans of the dental office and amalgam separator must be approved by NBC prior to installation

Maintenance of Amalgam Separator

1. Amalgam separators must be installed and maintained such that all flow from vacuum systems; cuspidors and applicable sinks receive proper treatment.
2. Amalgam separators must be operational at all times.
3. Follow the manufacturer's specification for maintenance of the separator.
4. Inspect the separator weekly to ensure proper operation.

Certification and Record Keeping

1. The dental office must document all separator and trap inspections, cleaning and maintenance activities in a bound logbook.
2. Information in the logbooks must include:
 - Date (mm/dd/yy) of each trap/separator inspection/service activity;
 - A clear indication of which trap/separator is being serviced;
 - All routine and non-routine activities conducted (i.e., cleaning, maintenance, repairs, etc.);
 - Signature of person conducting activity.

Best Management Practices

Dental offices choosing this Option must adhere to all of the required BMPs detailed in this brochure.

1. While regular sampling of wastewater effluent, on the part of the dental facility, is not required as part of Option 1 of the NBC BMP Program, installation of a sampling location is required.

OPTION 2

NBC BMP Implementation without Separation Equipment

(Routine Wastewater Sampling and Compliance Required)

Under Option 2, Dental Offices must implement all applicable NBC Dental BMPs, and regularly sample and analyze the wastewater to demonstrate compliance for silver and mercury. All amalgam waste must flow through a central sample location or multiple sample locations if necessary. If the monitoring results show the dental office to be out of compliance with the discharge limitations, additional pretreatment may be required to attain compliance. The office may elect to modify operations and install separation equipment and participate in Option 1 of this BMP.

Specific BMP Requirements for NBC Dental BMP Option 2

Installation of Sampling Location

Dental facilities choosing this option must collect and analyze samples of their wastewater discharges in order to demonstrate compliance with NBC discharge limits. This will require the separation of sanitary flow from dental process wastewater and the installation of a wastewater sample collection valve.

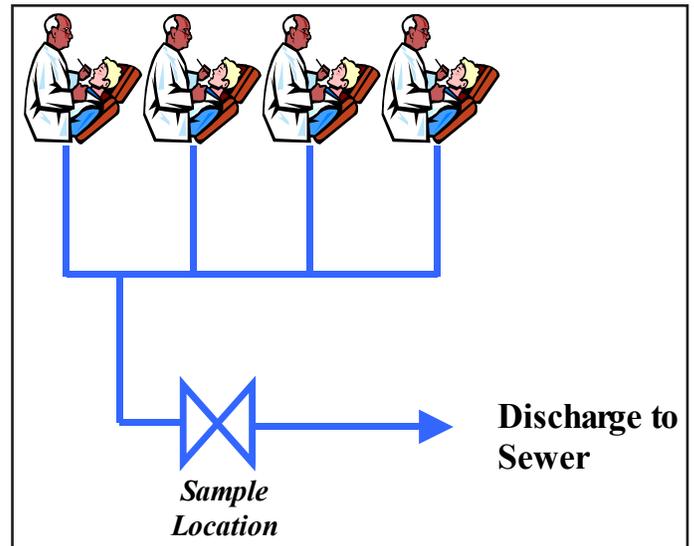
The wastewater sample collection valve must be configured and installed in such a manner that a representative sample of all and any amalgam containing wastewater can be collected at any time during normal operating hours. This will require the installation of a single central sampling location for all flow from vacuum systems and cuspidors or sampling locations for individual wastewater streams. Please note that separate sampling locations will increase sampling and analysis costs.

Sampling and Monitoring

Samples must be properly collected and preserved and sent to an approved laboratory for mercury and silver analysis on a quarterly basis. The analytical results must be submitted to NBC within the specified time frame along with a completed Self Monitoring Compliance Report.

Effluent Discharge Compliance

The dental facility must maintain compliance with NBC's discharge limits for mercury and silver. Facilities found to be in non-compliance must immediately notify NBC and initiate and continue to conduct weekly sampling of their wastewater discharges until compliance is established for four consecutive weeks. Facilities found to be in Significant Non-Compliance may have their names published in a local newspaper at the end of the calendar year. Continued non-compliance may result in the issuance of fines.



Typical Effluent Wastewater Sampling



1. Approved sample valve



2. Always flush valve briefly and safely before sampling



3. Sample collection in progress

Mandatory Best Management Practices

Chair Side Traps

1. Equip all dental chairs with chair side traps to capture large amalgam particles from cuspidors and vacuum systems.
2. Use traps with the smallest screen size that your vendor says will work.
3. While not required as a condition for participation in this program, disposable chair side traps are preferred to reusable traps due to the difficulty of cleaning traps for reuse without releasing captured amalgam particles to the sewer system during the cleaning process.

Maintenance of Chair Side Traps

1. Check to make sure all chair-side traps are in place when chair is in use.
2. Inspect chair-side traps on a daily basis and clean or replace as necessary.
3. If using disposable chair side traps, place spent traps directly into a labeled amalgam waste storage container. Never rinse a used trap over a sink that is directly connected to the sewer or place in trash.
4. If using a reusable trap remove all visible amalgam particles from the trap by emptying the contents into a labeled storage container.
5. Never dispose of the collected amalgam down the drain, in the trash or with sharps and/or biohazard waste.
6. Rinse reusable traps only if necessary and only in sinks plumbed into an amalgam separator using a minimum amount of water.

Maintenance of Vacuum Pump Filters

1. Check to make sure your vacuum pumps are equipped with filters. Talk to your equipment vendor to upgrade all such equipment not equipped with filters.
2. Talk to your equipment vendor to make sure you are using the smallest available vacuum filter screen that will not compromise the efficiency of the vacuum system.
3. Dry-turbine vacuums - Check to make sure the air/water separator is free of built-up sludge. Manage collected sludge as you would a mercury containing waste - do not wash down drain.
4. Change vacuum pump filters at least once per month or more frequently in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations.
5. After removing the filter hold it over a spill tray or other type of container that can catch any water that has collected in the trap. Carefully decant the water without losing any visible amalgam. The decanted water, if it contains no visible amalgam, may be discharged to the sewer through an amalgam separator.
6. Place spent filters in their original container or in another sealed container and properly store prior to disposal/recycling as a mercury-containing waste.

Storage, Management and Disposal of Scrap Amalgam

1. Collect and store all contact and non-contact amalgam in separate appropriate labeled and closed containers.
2. Label all containers used to store waste amalgam with the words "Hazardous Waste" and "Waste Mercury/Amalgam."
3. Wastes containing mercury are regulated as hazardous waste by the RIDEM and EPA - comply with all state and federal hazardous waste management regulations (see section on Hazardous Waste Management).
4. Do not mix waste streams, including contact and non-contact amalgam waste, without checking with your waste hauler and disposal/recycling facility first. Mixing of waste streams may limit disposal and/or recycling options and increase waste management costs.
5. Do not put mercury-containing waste in medical waste containers. Disposal methods used for medical waste, such as incineration, will release mercury into the environment.

Please note: "empty" prepackaged amalgam capsules may contain enough residual amalgam to be classified as a hazardous waste. While not a Mandatory BMP, it is recommended that empty capsules be collected and stored separate from other amalgam waste. This will allow for testing of the spent capsules in order to determine an ultimate disposal method.

Line Cleaners

Dental clinics may regularly use a liquid cleaner to disinfect the pipes in their vacuum system. Certain brands of line cleaners that are corrosive or oxidizers must be avoided because they dissolve solid mercury. Never use bleach (sodium hypochlorite) or a bleach-containing product to clean vacuum lines, instruments or equipment that may be contaminated with mercury or amalgam. Mercury that is mobilized in this way is very difficult to trap and can easily travel to the sewer plant or into the receiving waters. The following brands of cleaners and disinfectants are acceptable:

- Green and Clean (Metasys)
- GC Spray-Cide (GC America)
- Sani-Treet Plus (Enzyme Industries, Inc.)
- VacuCleanse Evacuation (Infection Control Tech)

The above list is not all-inclusive and NBC may give written approval to use other cleaners. The NBC will review requests to use other cleaners upon receipt of a Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) for the proposed cleaner.

Mandatory Best Management Practices

Clean Plumbing and Sink Traps

Due to the potential past use of sinks as disposal outlets for contact and non-contact scrap amalgam, all sink traps in the vicinity of mercury use (past or present) must be removed, inspected and cleaned.

1. Remove sink traps/elbows and inspect for sludge build-up.
2. Collect any sludge in a container separate from scrap amalgam waste.
3. Install new traps/elbows or replace the existing traps/elbows after cleaning with an appropriate line cleaner.
4. Dispose of the sludge as a mercury containing waste or have samples of each waste stream tested by a licensed analytical laboratory prior to ultimate disposal. Guidance on testing waste samples can be obtained through NBC's Pollution Prevention Program.



Sinks Located in Operatories

Sinks located in operatories have the potential to discharge amalgam waste to the sewer from the cleaning and rinsing of dental instruments, chair side traps and other equipment or devices that may come into contact with amalgam. Two Sink Use Alternatives are available to dental offices participating in these Best Management Practices.

Sink Use Alternative A: Designate all sinks for "Sanitary Use Only" by eliminating the cleaning of amalgam contaminated instruments, traps and other equipment in all sinks. This is the simplest and least expensive of the two options.

For sinks designated for "Sanitary Use Only" the following conditions and procedures will apply:

1. Washing of instruments, filters from chair-side traps and used amalgam capsules will be strictly prohibited.
2. Sign stating: "Sinks to Be Used for Sanitary Purposes Only - No Chemical or Amalgam Disposal" must be clearly posted at each sink.
3. All employees must be trained on this policy and certification of training maintained on site.

Sink Use Alternative B: Designate certain sinks for "Sanitary Use Only" and other sinks for "Equipment Cleaning Only." This alternative requires sinks in which equipment cleaning will take place be plumbed into an amalgam separator - if you choose to not install an amalgam separator you will have to comply with Alternative A. If you choose to install an amalgam separator, please note that some separators may not allow for the connection of sinks. Discuss this with your separator equipment vendor before purchasing a separator.

For sinks designated for "Sanitary Use Only" all conditions and procedures noted above will apply.

For sinks used for "Equipment Cleaning Only" the following conditions and procedures will apply:

1. Plumb each of these sinks into to the amalgam separator.
2. Install flow restricting orifices in each sink discharge line in order to limit and control the flow rate to the separator and prevent washout of the amalgam separator
3. Submit plans of each of these sinks and the amalgam separator to NBC for approval prior to installation.
4. Manage all debris removed from these sinks and drain lines as mercury contaminated waste.
5. Post signs stating: "Washing of Instruments and Filters Contaminated with Amalgam only - Sanitary Use Prohibited" at each sink.
6. Train all employees on these policies and procedures and maintain certification of training on site.

Please note: if flow can not be adequately controlled using flow restrictors a surge tank capable of handling peak flow from these sinks may need to be installed up stream of the amalgam separator.

Wastewater Discharge Permit Requirements

Annual Certification and Record Keeping

1. Document all separator (if applicable) and trap inspections, cleaning and maintenance activities in a bound logbook.
2. Include the following information in the logbooks:
 - a. Date (mm/dd/yy) of each trap/separator inspection/service activity,
 - b. A clear indication of which trap/separator is being serviced,
 - c. All routine and non-routine activities conducted (i.e. cleaning, maintenance, etc.)
 - d. Signature of person conducting activity.
3. Maintain all Hazardous Waste Manifest documents and/or shipping papers of mercury waste sent off-site for disposal or recycling on-site and have them immediately available for inspection by NBC.
4. Submit an annual certification statement to NBC attesting to compliance with all Mandatory BMPs and any specific BMPs required by the chosen option.

Personnel Training Requirements

All personnel associated with the handling and management of amalgam and/or mercury containing materials/ wastes must be trained with respect to:

- the hazards associated with mercury
- hazardous waste management regulations
- procedures to follow in the event of a spill or an accident including spill-reporting requirements.

Waste Management and Spill Response

If any elemental mercury is used or is present in the dental office, including mercury from historical use and mercury in any medical instruments such as thermometers, a mercury spill kit must be maintained on site and all appropriate staff trained in its use.

Please note: even very small amounts of metallic mercury (for example, a few drops) can raise air concentrations of mercury to levels that may be harmful to human health. The longer people breathe the contaminated air, the greater the risk to their health. Metallic mercury and its vapors are extremely difficult to remove from clothes, furniture, carpets, floors, walls, and other such items. If these items are not properly cleaned, the mercury can remain for months or years, and continue to be a source of exposure.

Steps to take in case of a spill:

- Contact your local poison control center, fire department, the RIDEM or the RIDOH for advice on cleanup the spill.
- Ask everyone to leave the area.
- Close -off the area while unoccupied.
- Shut off conditioning and air circulation to the room
- Open windows and doors in the area of the spill to ventilate the area while clean-up activities are taking place.
- Wear rubber or latex gloves to prevent skin contact with metallic mercury.
- Use a dry sponge, paper towel or paper to clean up the spill.
- Place all collected mercury in a sealed glass jar.
- In the event of a large mercury spill (more than a broken thermometer's worth), immediately evacuate everyone from the area, seal off the area as well as possible, and call local and state authorities for assistance.

What Not to do when there is a spill:

- Do NOT use a vacuum cleaner to clean up a mercury spill. A vacuum cleaner will spread the mercury vapors throughout the area, thereby increasing the chance of exposure.
- Do NOT attempt to sweep the spill with a broom.
- Never dispose of mercury down the drain.
- Never throw materials used to clean up a spill in the trash - contact the RIDEM for guidance.

Dental Amalgam Information on the World Wide Web

ADA Best Management Practices for Amalgam Waste:
www.ada.org/prof/resources/topics/topics_amalgamwaste.pdf

Dental Amalgam Recycling Facilities - Northeast Region:
www.des.state.nh.us/nhppp/amalgam_recycling_facilities.htm

Great Lakes Pollution Prevention Roundtable:
www.glrppr.org/contacts/gltopichub.cfm?sectorid=131

Mercury Spill Kit Comparative Information:
www.brooks.af.mil/dis/DIS60/sec6b.htm

Naval Institute for Dental and Biomedical Research:
www.dentalmercury.com/home.cfm

NEWMOA Dental Mercury Topic Hub:
www.newmoa.org/prevention/topichub/toc.cfm?hub=103&sub-sec=7&na=7

Waste Reduction Resource Center's Dental Hub:
<http://wrrc.p2pays.org/industry/dental.htm>

Pollution Prevention

The goal of pollution prevention is to reduce or eliminate the use of toxic substances at the source. This minimizes the release of toxic compounds and serves to protect human health by ultimately reducing exposure to solid, dissolved or gaseous toxic compounds. Although source reduction is most efficient, it is often combined with control-based approaches such as end-of-pipe treatment to achieve desired results. Pollution Prevention activities and recycling in dental offices are essential in order to minimize releases of polluting substances into the sewer system, medical waste, ordinary trash or environment. Recommended activities include the use of the following materials, processes or practices:

1. Use non-amalgam substitutes where appropriate as determined by general dental practice procedures.
2. Utilize prepackaged, single-use amalgam capsules to eliminate larger bulk quantities of elemental mercury (also referred to as free, bulk, or raw mercury).
3. Stock amalgam materials in a range of capsule sizes. Use the smallest capsule required for the job at hand to minimize the amount of scrap non-contact amalgam produced.
4. Properly seal all amalgam capsules before amalgamation. Reassemble capsules immediately after dispensing amalgam. Disassemble and clean the amalgamator on a regular basis.
5. If a small amount of elemental mercury is to be disposed of, initiate a reaction with amalgam alloy to form scrap amalgam, which can then be recycled through your amalgam recycler.
6. When removing an existing amalgam, attempt to remove it in chunks so that it is more likely to be caught in the chair-side trap.
7. Consider using techniques that eliminate the need for cuspidors in the operatory when possible.
8. Do not mix different types of wastes, such as contact and non-contact amalgam, when it impacts wastewater treatment or waste disposal. Whenever possible, collect waste amalgam solids for proper storage before they mix with wastewater.
9. Do not discharge solutions that mobilize mercury such as certain vacuum line cleaners that are corrosive or contain bleach or other oxidizing compounds. Neutral, enzymatic cleaners are preferred.
10. During office renovations, alert renovators to the possibility of historical mercury spills that may have resulted in the presence of mercury in carpets, floor cracks, behind moldings and other areas where amalgam capsules may have been spilled. A waste is considered hazardous if TCLP tests indicate a mercury concentration over 0.2 mg/l. Seamless and impermeable floors are easiest to keep clean.

Hazardous Waste Management

Mercury is one of eight "heavy metals" regulated by EPA and the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM) as a "Characteristically Toxic" Hazardous Waste.

This means wastes containing mercury, over established Regulatory Levels (0.2 mg/l for mercury using the Toxicity Characteristic Leaching Procedure), must be handled in strict compliance with federal and state hazardous waste regulatory requirements. A detailed overview of these regulations is outside the scope of this BMP document and the reader is referred to the document "Hazardous Waste Compliance Workbook for Rhode Island Generators" at <http://www.state.ri.us> for a comprehensive description of Rhode Island's hazardous waste management regulations. The following general guidelines, however, should be followed as part of generating and managing wastes containing amalgam:

Waste Generation

1. Apply for an EPA Identification Number through the RIDEM,
2. Inform all employees of the hazards associated with handling waste amalgam, and
3. Write a brief procedure to be followed in case of a spill of waste amalgam and familiarize all applicable employees with these procedures.

Waste Storage

1. Keep all containers closed except when adding or removing waste amalgam,
2. Label containers with the words "Waste Mercury Amalgam",
3. Inspect containers on a weekly basis, and
4. Store containers in a safe and secure location away from office traffic.

Waste Shipment

1. Become familiar with hazardous waste manifesting requirements,
2. Utilize only properly licensed/permitted waste haulers, and
3. Utilize only properly licensed/permitted waste recycling/disposal firms.
4. Contact the state environmental regulatory agency from which a waste hauler, recycler and/or disposal company resides in order to assure they are in compliance with all applicable regulations. A list of contacts for all state environmental agencies can be found at www.epa.gov.

Record-keeping

1. Maintain a readily accessible file on employee training with respect to hazardous waste management, and
2. Maintain a readily assessable file with all copies of Hazardous Waste Manifests.

Note: EPA regulations allow for certain exemptions from strict hazardous waste management regulations when a waste is being sent off-site for recycling. These exemptions, however, are not always adopted by individual state environmental agencies and are often open to interpretation. It is a good idea to comply with all hazardous waste management regulatory requirements even if the waste is being recycled.



NARRAGANSETT BAY COMMISSION



Emergency Contacts

Rhode Island Department of
Environmental Management: 401/222-6822

Narragansett Bay Commission: 401/461-8848

Rhode Island Poison Control Center: 401/444-5727

National Response Center: 800/424-8802

Rhode Island Emergency
Management Agency: 401/946-9996

Local Hospital: _____

Fire Department: _____

Useful Web Sites

www.narrabay.com
www.epa.gov/mercury/index.html
www.state.ri.us/dem
www.newmoa.org