

Set a Shining Example:

Don't Flush Mercury Down the Drain!

Mercury-containing wastes are a fact of life in dental offices.

But washed down the drain or otherwise improperly disposed, they can find their way into San Francisco Bay, impairing its quality and contaminating fish. Eating these fish is especially harmful to pregnant women, children, and developing fetuses. Your local wastewater treatment facilities are working to reduce mercury discharges to the Bay...and you can help:

Bulk mercury Place unwanted waste in an airtight container labeled "Bulk Mercury Waste" and recycle through one of the firms listed on back.

Scrap amalgam Place excess remaining at the end of a procedure in an airtight container labeled "Scrap Amalgam." Recover this waste as scrap metal or recycle as above.

Amalgam waste collected in traps and vacuum filters Empty reusable traps into an airtight wide-mouthed container labeled "Amalgam for Recycling." Place disposable traps directly into the container. Other waste amalgam, such as extracted teeth with amalgam restorations, should also be placed in this container. Recycle or dispose of as hazardous waste.



More Tips

1 ▶ **Never rinse traps in the sink.** The trapped mercury-containing amalgam will go directly to the sewer and wastewater treatment plant, which isn't equipped to handle it.

2 ◀ **Don't put mercury-containing waste in medical waste containers.** Incineration and solid-waste disposal can release mercury directly into the environment.

3 ▶ **Collect empty used amalgam capsules.** Place in scrap amalgam container for recycling.



4 ▼

Don't place other materials in your mercury waste or recycling containers. The added volume will cost more and may make disposal or recycling more difficult.

5 ▶

Don't mix waste streams without checking with your waste hauler first. Mixing may limit recycling and disposal options and result in higher costs.

Talk to your waste hauler about specific handling requirements for each mercury-containing waste stream.

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Contact your local household hazardous waste collection facility to find out if your office qualifies as a “conditionally exempt small quantity generator.” This may be more convenient and less expensive than hiring a licensed waste hauler. In East Palo Alto, Los Altos, Mountain View and Palo Alto, call (650) 496-6980. For the rest of Santa Clara County, call (408) 299-7300. In San Mateo County, call (650) 599-1600.

Check Your System

For lots more information, visit:
www.city.palo-alto.ca.us/cleanbay/dental.html

- Check that your high-speed evacuation system is linked to a filter-equipped vacuum system.
- Check that vacuum pumps are equipped with filters. Even some dry turbine vacuum systems need filters. Check with manufacturer.
- Check that you are using the smallest available vacuum filter screen without compromising vacuum suction. Ask manufacturer for the finest screen that will work with your unit.
- Dry turbine vacuums only: Check to ensure that built-up sludge in air/water separators is cleaned regularly.
- Check that sludge from filters and air/water separators is recycled or disposed of as hazardous waste. Do NOT rinse sludge down the drain!

Buying a New System? Retrofitting an Existing One?

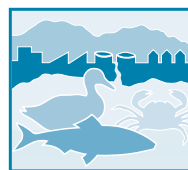
- Buy traps and filters with the smallest screen size that your vendor says will work.
- Consider supplementary filters or settling devices to further reduce amalgam discharges. Contact the RWQCP at (650) 329-2598 for more information.

Amalgam Waste Recyclers

The following companies accept amalgam waste. Contact the recycler directly to determine container and labeling requirements

	Scrap Amalgam	Amalgam Traps & Filters	Amalgam Sludge	Bulk Elemental Mercury	Spill Cleanup Materials	X-ray Fixer	X-ray Lead Foils
EcoSolutions/Stericycle – Milpitas (408) 935-8050	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼
Safety-Kleen Corporation – San Jose (408) 294-8778	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼
Integrated Waste Control – Hayward (510) 583-7980	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼
Photo Waste Recycling – San Rafael (415) 459-8807	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼

Use these spaces to add other recyclers.



Regional Water Quality Control Plant

