



# A Dentist's Guide to the Dental Amalgam Program & Permit

## WHO IS REQUIRED TO PARTICIPATE?

Dentists who remove or place amalgam fillings and who practice in the San Jose/ Santa Clara Water Pollution Control Plant service area are required to obtain a Dental Wastewater Discharge Permit and follow Best Management Practices.

**D**ental wastewater may contain mercury, a toxin that can affect the health of waterways, wildlife, and people. The San Francisco Bay — the jewel of our region — has been designated as “impaired” by the Regional Water Quality Control Board (Water Board) due to high levels of mercury in fish, water, and sediment. The Water Board requires Bay Area wastewater treatment facilities, including the San Jose/Santa Clara Water Pollution Control Plant (Plant), to implement programs that control mercury at its source.

Capturing mercury at its source and before it reaches the sewer system is the best way to reduce mercury pollution in both water and air. The Dental Amalgam Program for the eight cities and unincorporated areas served by the Plant requires dentists to implement practices aimed at keeping dental-related mercury out of the sanitary sewer system — and out of our Bay.

## How does a dental practice comply?

### STEP 1

Apply for a Dental Wastewater Discharge Permit. Visit our Web site or call for an application.

### STEP 2

Follow Best Management Practices (see inside).

### STEP 3

Install an approved amalgam separator. Visit our Web site for a list.

### STEP 4

Submit documentation certifying your compliance with the requirements (see checklist on back page).

### STEP 5

Keep training, disposal, and equipment records on site and available for inspection.

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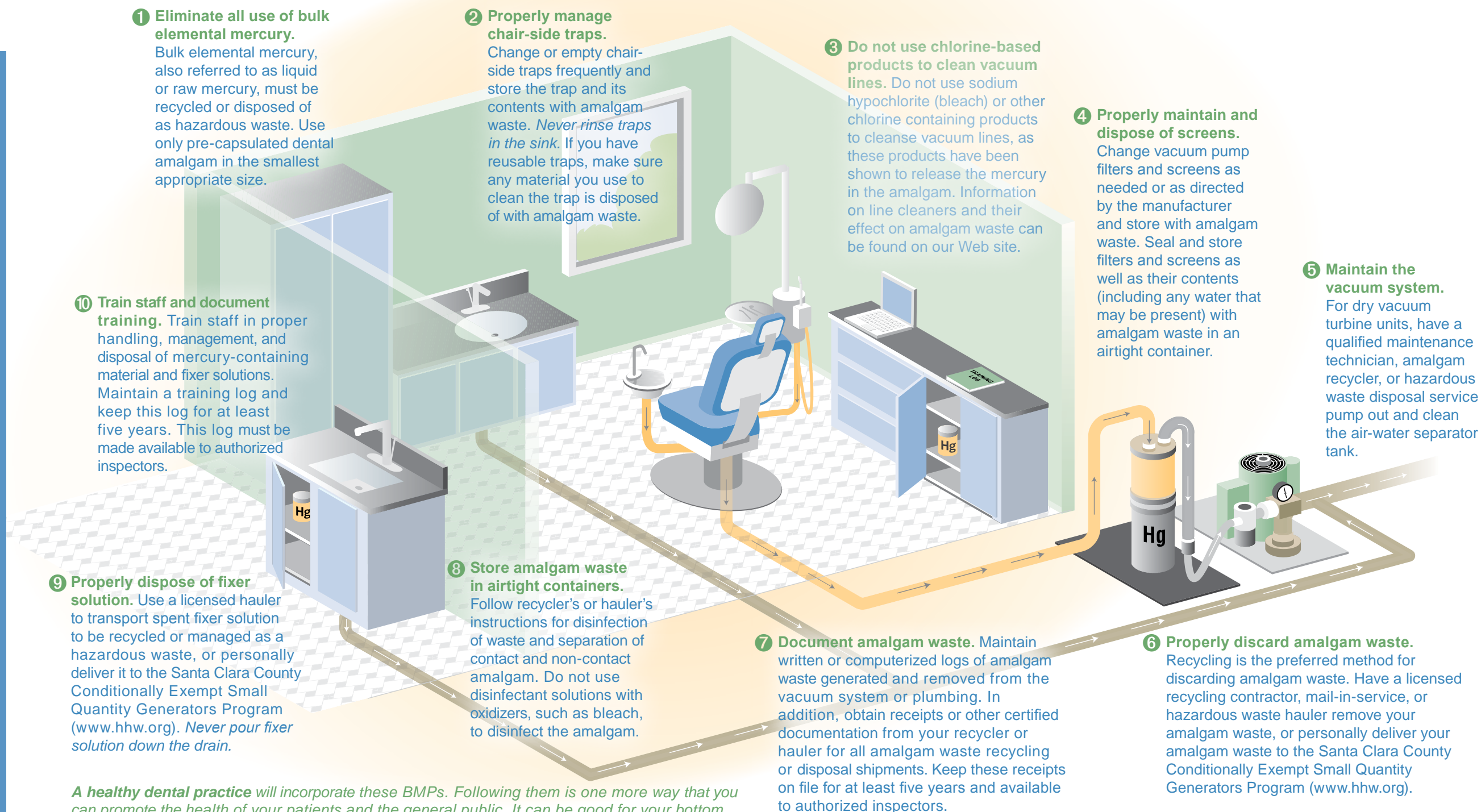


# Dentists help reduce mercury pollution with these Best Management Practices (BMPs)

These practices are required as part of your discharge permit.

Amalgam waste must **NEVER** be placed in the regular trash, placed with infectious waste (red bag), or flushed down the drain or toilet. The American Dental Association strongly recommends recycling amalgam waste as a best management practice for dental offices.

Amalgam waste includes contact amalgam such as extracted teeth containing amalgam restorations; non-contact or scrap amalgam; used, leaking, or unusable amalgam capsules; and amalgam captured by chair-side traps, vacuum pump screens, and other devices, including the traps, filters, and screens themselves.



BMPs are: Good for the environment • Good for patients • Good for business



# Questions

## Frequently Asked

### **What is amalgam waste?**

Amalgam waste means and includes non-contact dental amalgam (dental amalgam scrap that has not been in contact with the patient); contact dental amalgam (including, but not limited to, extracted teeth containing amalgam); dental amalgam sludge captured by chair-side traps, vacuum pump filters, screens, and other dental amalgam trapping devices including the traps, filters and screens; used, leaking or unusable dental amalgam capsules; and used amalgam separator canisters.

### **Is any dental practice exempt from these amalgam waste management requirements?**

A practice is exempt from this requirement if amalgam fillings are removed or placed three or fewer days per year and the facility serves one of the following primary functions:

- Radiology
- Oral and maxillofacial surgery
- Oral pathology or oral medicine
- Orthodontics
- Periodontics
- Endodontics
- Prosthodontics

### **Will separators installed before the program requirements take effect be acceptable for compliance?**

Yes, but only if the unit is an approved ISO 11143 certified amalgam separator.

### **Will chairside traps and vacuum filters meet the requirement?**

No, chairside traps and vacuum filters are separate devices that do not meet the amalgam removal requirement.

### **Will dental practices be charged permit fees like large industries?**

No, there is no permit fee at this time.

### **What is the duration of my permit?**

Dental Wastewater Discharge Permits are effective for a period of five (5) years. The effective and renewal dates are indicated in your permit.

### **Will my practice be inspected for compliance with my permit?**

Yes, a scheduled inspection will be performed at least once during the five year permit period. If your practice is out of compliance, additional inspections may be scheduled.

## Compliance Checklist



*All required forms and a list of approved amalgam separators can be found on our Web site.*

- Submit complete Dental Wastewater Discharge Permit Application.
- Receive Dental Wastewater Discharge Permit with effective date.
- Implement Best Management Practices (BMPs).
- Submit Best Management Practices (BMPs) Certification Form within 90 days of permit's effective date.
- Install approved ISO 11143 certified amalgam separator.
- Submit Amalgam Separator Installation Certification within 180 days of effective date of permit.
- Keep training, disposal, and equipment records on-site and available for inspection.
- Submit Dental Wastewater Discharge Permit Annual Report according to the deadline listed in the permit.



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*Serving the cities of San José, Santa Clara, and Milpitas; Cupertino Sanitary District; West Valley Sanitation District (including Campbell, Los Gatos, Monte Sereno, and Saratoga); County Sanitation District No. 2-3; and Burbank Sanitary District.*



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