

The Association of Clean Water Agencies (ACWA) has been working in partnership with the dental community for the last decade to minimize mercury, silver and lead discharges into the public sewer system. Vacuum lines, sinks and toilets in your office all lead to local wastewater facilities which clean the water and release it into surface waters. Our facilities aren't designed to remove metals like mercury and silver and we need support from businesses to comply with Oregon law and take steps to reduce pollution.

Mandatory amalgam separators have helped reduce pollution but public utilities are facing stricter permit requirements to further reduce the amount of mercury discharged. ACWA will be working in partnership with the Oregon Dental Association and the Oregon Board of Dentistry to inspect dental offices for compliance and to offer Best Management Practices (BMPs) to help prevent pollution.

Best Management Practices

Follow the Best Management Practices (BMPs) to comply with Oregon law and to help maintain water quality. Be sure to keep thorough records of all maintenance and recycling occurrences and check with your recycler for requirements.



Amalgam

- Don't put any type of amalgam (including teeth with amalgam) in the garbage, red bag, or down the drain.
- Don't rinse devices that contain amalgam over drains or sinks.
- Make sure your amalgam separators are properly maintained.
- Stock a variety of amalgam capsule sizes to help prevent waste.
- Be sure to place empty capsules in a well-sealed and clearly labeled container for recycling.



Chair-Side Traps and Vacuum Pump Filters

- Flush the vacuum system with non-oxidizing, non-bleach, non-chlorine line solution.
- Handle chair-side traps and vacuum filters as amalgam waste and store in separate airtight, labeled containers.
- Replace and recycle screens, traps and vacuum pump filters regularly. Consult with your recycler about their requirements for filters.



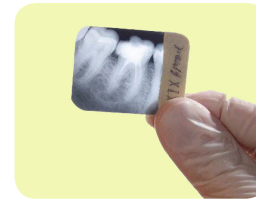
Non-oxidizing Line Cleaners

- Line cleansers with bleach can dissolve mercury from amalgam particles in dental wastewater. Use line cleansers that do not contain bleach or chlorine.

X-Ray Silver Fixer (if using traditional x-rays)



- Do not pour silver fixer down the drain.
- Make sure to keep fixer and developer separate.
- Contact your local photo developing company; they may accept your fixer.



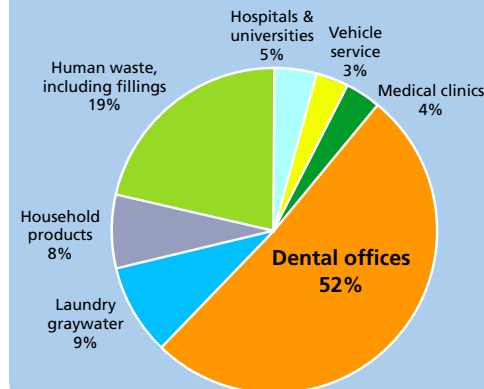
X-Ray Lead Foil (if using traditional x-rays)

- Collect lead foil for recycling.
- Avoid giving lead foil to customers as this may become a liability.
- There are many mail-in programs for dentists for lead waste.
- Contact your local Les Schwab Tire Center to see if they will accept your lead waste.

Recyclers

Find local, regional, and national recyclers of amalgam, lead foil, and silver fixer on the ODA website (oregondental.org) by following the links to [Government Affairs](#)>>[Regulatory Information](#)>>[BMPs](#)

Mercury sources to a Wastewater Treatment Facility



In the absence of dental Best Management Practices and amalgam separators, mercury amalgam waste from dental offices is estimated to be the single largest source of mercury to wastewater treatment facilities.

Dental Amalgam

A variety of amalgam waste is generated at a dental office:

- Scrap amalgam
- Used, leaking, or unusable amalgam capsules
- Amalgam captured in chairside traps and vacuum pump screens, including the traps and screens themselves
- Amalgam separator waste
- Contact" amalgam including teeth with amalgam restorations

Ask Your Recycler

- What kind of amalgam waste do you accept?
- Does your service include pick up or delivery?
- Do you provide packaging? If not, how should waste be packaged?
- Does your company accept empty amalgam capsules or extracted teeth with amalgam?
- Do you accept whole filters from the vacuum pump?
- What type of recycling licenses do you have?
- Do you provide documentation that the material was properly recycled?



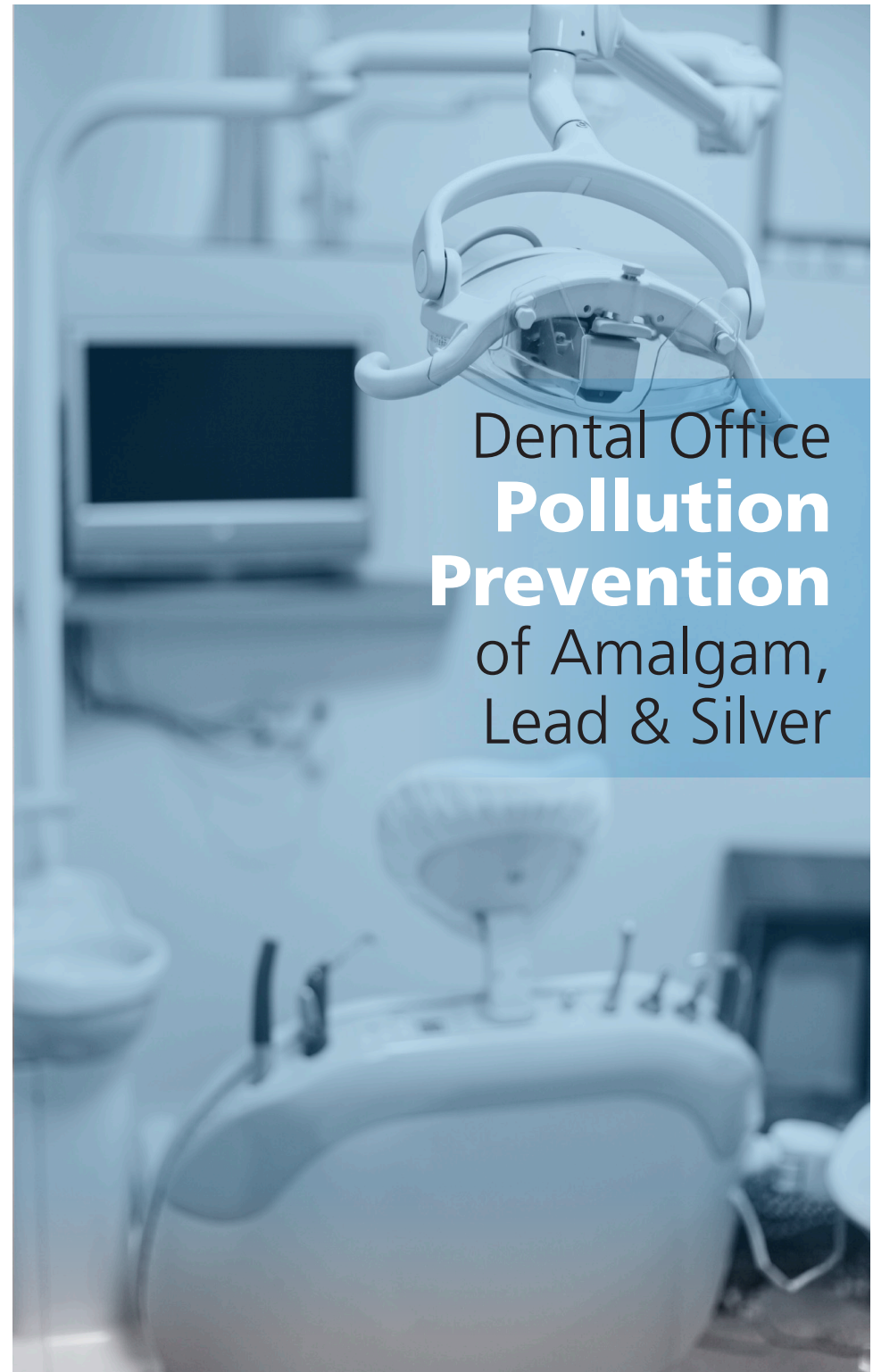
Records

Maintain records on replacement and recycling of waste amalgam containers and amalgam separator collection units; also for x-ray silver fixer waste and lead foil waste (if you use traditional/non-digital x-rays).

More Information

For more information on dental office pollution prevention, Best Management Practices, and requirements under Oregon law please refer to the following.

- American Dental Association BMPs for Amalgam Waste - ada.org/1540.aspx
- Oregon Dental Association BMPs – oregondental.org
- Environmental Protection Agency Dental Amalgam - epa.gov/hg/dentalamalgam.html
- Clean Water Services Dental Waste - cleanwaterservices.org/DentalWaste



Dental Office Pollution Prevention of Amalgam, Lead & Silver