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A performance evaluation of amalgam separators

[The Changing Landscape of Dental Waste Management](#)
Article by Dr. Alfred L. Frost, DRNA's VP of Clinical & Scientific Affairs

Contact Us

<http://www.drna.com>

T.: 800.360.1001

info@drna.com

Update on EPA's Amalgam Separator Ruling

[EPA Will Propose a Rule to Protect Waterways by Reducing Mercury from Dental Offices.](#) As this press release states, in 2012 EPA will issue standards for installing amalgam separators in all dental practices. Under the rules of these proposed regulations, prior to the comment period, the EPA cannot publicly indicate the status of its recommendations. It is our understanding the rule can range from requiring an ANSI standard (similar to ISO standards) or up to a parts per billion discharge standard. Given that DRNA is the **only** company to have participated in the EPA ETV test, we are guaranteeing EPA compliance whether it is with our line of BU or MRU amalgam separators. The EPA is currently encouraging the early installation of amalgam separators in order for dental offices to meet their amalgam separator installation deadline.

Why should a dentist consider early installation of an amalgam separator?

* To encourage early compliance, some Local authorities are providing rebates/funding for early installation of an amalgam separator. Contact your city/county health department or the regional sewer district for more information.

* To protect the environment. DRNA's amalgam separator customers will also receive a complimentary *Environmentally Conscious Certificate* to display to patients and staff showing that you are making the best efforts to protect your community.

However, if you are not ready to purchase the amalgam separator just yet, there are other smaller steps that one can take to protect the environment, such as:

- Flushing the vacuum system with disinfecting line solution before changing the chair-side trap;
- Changing chair-side amalgam traps as often as necessary, but at least monthly; and
- Replacing & recycling the vacuum pump filters as per the manufacturer's guidelines, which is the ADA's Best Management Practices recommendation



Critical Requirements for Regulated Waste

Regulated Waste is divided up into two categories: *Bio-Hazardous* and *Hazardous* waste. Bio-Hazardous waste consists of containers, equipment, or disposable items

containing recognizable fluid blood or OPIM, items which drip blood or body fluids when compressed, items which flake dried blood when shaken, human surgery tissue including extracted teeth, and pharmacologic waste. Each of these items must be handled according to OSHA standards and then disposed of by EPA's guidelines, and local municipalities.

The Hazardous waste from dental offices consists of materials containing mercury, silver and lead. The major difference is that these hazardous wastes cannot be disposed of in the same containers that bio-hazardous wastes are placed in. Such hazardous waste must be placed in a separate container and then recycled. If you are in need of a recycling, contact us for a complete solution.

A Special Note to California Dental Practices:

California's Unique Universal Waste Regulations – "Pharmaceutical waste, either expired or partially-used, must be collected and transferred by a DHS-registered hauler to a DHS-licensed incinerator."

Visit http://www.cda.org/library/public/policy/app5_waste.htm for more information.

More information on regulated waste management can be found in DRNA's online CE course. Contact our education division for more information.

DRNA's New Educational Division

Last month DRNA launched its new Education Division.

As the trusted market leader in providing reliable waste management services to the dental community, this is yet another extensive benefit for our customers! Courses will be provided throughout the United States. Also, all of our courses will be available on-line for additional convenience to DRNA customers. Our courses will cover critical topics such as "***Dynamic changes to environmental regulations and compliance requirements imposed on the dental profession and waste management***", and "***Your Untapped Profit Center: a review of how to save on waste management costs***".

To request CE courses from DRNA's Education Division, contact Crystal Ali at [800.360.1001 x 15](tel:800.360.1001), or by email, Cali@drna.com.

Upcoming Exhibits and Events

Look for us! DRNA will be exhibiting at these upcoming venues:

- Annual RDH meeting in Chicago, IL July 28th – 30th
- American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons (AAOMS), September 15 – 17th

We hope to see you there!

