Occupational Hazard Management

Environment Hazard Management

Jefferson County Environmental Services,
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Bio-Medical Waste Management

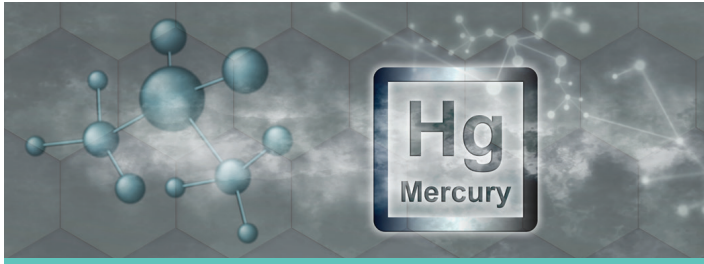
Environmental Improvement

For more information:

epa.gov/mercury/mercury-your-environment-steps-you-can-take

alabamapublichealth.gov/tox/assets/al-fish-advisory-2021.pdf

earth911.com



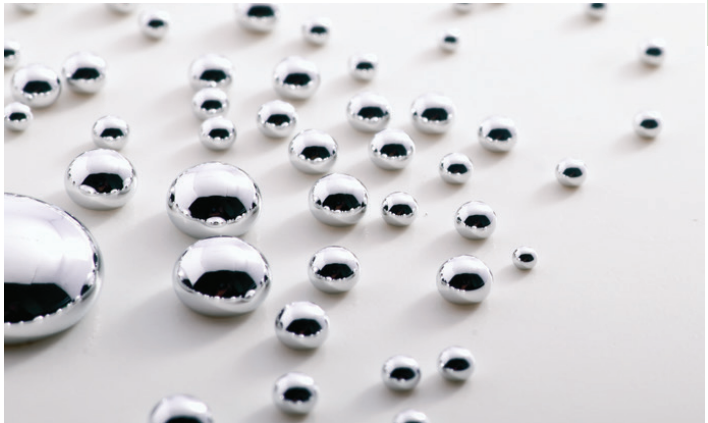
Prevent Mercury Pollution from Dental Amalgram, Aerosol and Vapor

JEFFERSON COUNTY ALABAMA

Dental offices account for a large portion of the mercury that is discharged in to the sanitary sewer system. Vacuum lines, sinks and drains all flow to the local water reclamation facility where the wastewater is treated. We need the help of our dental offices, labs and schools in the county to assist in keeping mercury out of the system. The water reclamation facilities are not designed to remove the mercury from the treated water and work hard to comply with regulatory permits.

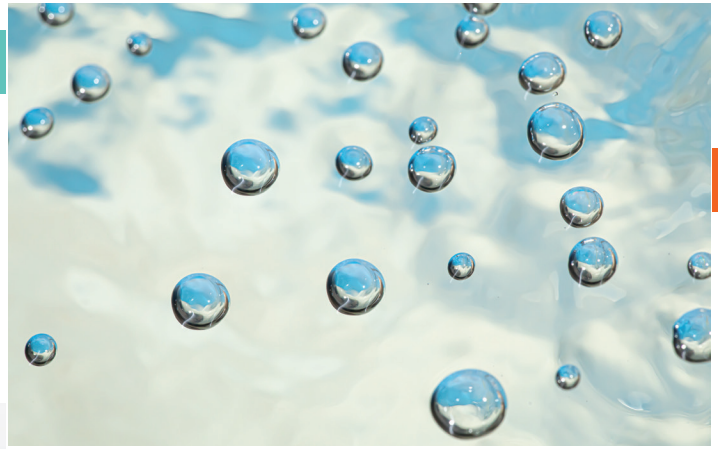
What is mercury?

- A natural element that is mined from ores and is toxic to humans and natural systems.
- It is a liquid at room temperature and appears shiny, silver-gray color and is odorless and can be absorbed through the skin if handled.
- Mercury, when heated, becomes volatile and changes into a colorless, odorless gas that can be toxic.



Where is mercury commonly found in dental settings?

- Mercury is found in amalgam.
- Amalgam is used for fillings.
- Amalgam can be in the form of scrap, unusable amalgam capsules. or captured in chairside traps and vacuum pump screens.



When dentists remove old amalgam fillings or place a new filling, mercury in the form of dental amalgam enters the wastewater discharged from the dental office. The mercury generated from waste amalgam can make its way into the environment through surface water discharge. This is what we need to prevent, to protect the fish and shellfish in the aquatic environment and the entire food chain from excessive exposure to mercury.

Amalgam separators (pictured) can be easily attached to dental chairs to capture waste mercury, keeping it out of waterways.

How Dentist should dispose of collected amalgam:

- Contract with a licensed recycling company.
- Use a mail-in service.

Best Management Practices in a dental settting:

- Install and use an amalgam separator unit.
- Never put any type of amalgam in the garbage or down the drain.
- Do not rinse devices that contain amalgam over drains or sinks.
- Use non-oxidizing line cleaners to minimize the dissolution of amalgam.

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