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## Breaking News

- [EPA issues final ruling on new dental amalgam requirements](#)

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EPA issues final ruling on new dental amalgam requirements

The **U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)** released a final rule requiring dental practices nationwide to install amalgam separators. Although the rule will be effective 30 days after publication in the Federal Register, the date for compliance for most dentists will not be for three years - at the end of 2019. Dental offices are the main source of mercury discharge to municipal treatment plants, according to the EPA. More than 100,000 practices in the U.S. use or remove amalgam and, each year, approximately 5.1 tons of mercury is discharged through wastewater lines to municipal treatment plants from these offices and subsequently released into the environment.

### The New Rules

- The new regulations will require facilities that place or remove amalgam to follow several best-management practices, including to collect and recycle scrap amalgam, and to clean the chairside traps with nonbleach or nonchlorine cleanser so as not to release mercury.
- The EPA ruling also requires practices that do not already have an amalgam separator that meets certain requirements to install one.
- Practices that already have a separator must replace their current separator with equipment that meets the new requirements within 10 years.
- The amalgam separator must be compliant with either the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) American National Standard/ADA Specification No. 108 for Amalgam Separators (2009) with Technical Addendum (2011) or the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) 11143 Standard (2008), or subsequent versions so long as that version requires amalgam separators to achieve at least a 95% removal efficiency.
- Dental offices must also submit a compliance report and have maintenance and inspection records available. The new rules apply to dental offices, dental schools, and clinics that discharge water to a municipal treatment plan.

### Exemptions

The rule also includes some notable exemptions:

- Dentists who practice in oral pathology, oral and maxillofacial radiology, oral and maxillofacial surgery, orthodontics, periodontics, and prosthodontics are exempt from the rule.
- Dentists who do not place amalgam and only remove amalgam in unplanned or emergency situations (estimated at less than 5 percent of removals) are also exempt.
- Mobile dental units are exempt.

To read the new rule, visit the EPA website at <https://www.epa.gov/eg/dental-effluent-guidelines>.

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