

FISCAL YEAR 2007 PROJECT
Persistent, Bioaccumulative, & Toxics (PBT) & Other Priority
Chemicals

Dental Amalgam Waste Collection & Management Project

Project Strategy: Increase the collection of dental amalgam waste through outreach efforts to educate dentists in New York and New Jersey about state requirements and key best management practices for dental amalgam waste.

Dental amalgam contains approximately 50 percent mercury and when dentists fill teeth with amalgam or existing amalgam fillings are repaired or removed, associated wastes are generated. Some of this amalgam waste is discharged in the wastewater from the dental chair and some of it becomes a solid waste. Mercury contamination in water bodies throughout New York and New Jersey is a well documented problem and has been a high priority for both of the states and EPA for over a decade. Dental amalgam waste needs to be managed properly to prevent releases to the environment through the wastewater discharges and through improper management of the waste materials.

The use of dental amalgam separators at dental offices can help to effectively collect dental amalgam waste. These separators are designed to fit on the water lines of the dental offices to extract and separate the mercury in the wastewater and collect it for proper disposal. New York State enacted a 2003 law that requires the collection and recycling of dental amalgam waste and the NYS DEC has promulgated rules for implementing this requirement, including mandatory amalgam separator installation at dental clinics. New Jersey DEP has begun to develop some outreach and assistance programs for dentists in the state and is currently considering options for promoting adoption of dental amalgam separators at NJ dental clinics.

In FY 2007 NEWMOA will collaborate with NYS DEC officials to print and mail a poster for dentists to use in their offices that summarizes key best management practices for dental amalgam wastes. The purpose of this poster is to provide an easy to read, visible reminder to dentists and their staff of the basic key practices for proper management of amalgam waste.

This project is funded by EPA Region 2.

For more information contact: Meg Wilcox, NEWMOA, (617)367-8558 x305;
mwilcox@newmoa.org.