



# CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS

ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT

Dear Dental Discharger,

You have received this letter because your dental facility discharges wastewater to the City of Grand Rapids sanitary sewer collection system. This correspondence is a reminder and guidance for your dental office in complying with 40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 441 – Dental Office Point Source Category. The amalgam recycling rule is an implementation of the Clean Water Act and was signed by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on Dec. 15, 2016. The change in EPA administration delayed further action until July 14, 2017 when the rule took effect.

Dental offices are the main source of mercury discharges to Publicly Owned Treatment Works (POTWs). EPA estimates that across the United States 5.1 tons of mercury and an additional 5.3 tons of other metals found in waste dental amalgam are collectively discharged into POTWs annually. Mercury from waste amalgam therefore can make its way into the environment from the POTW through the incineration, landfilling, land application of biosolids, or through surface water discharge. The purpose of this EPA final rule is to set a uniform national standard that will greatly reduce the discharge of mercury containing amalgam to POTWs in the United States. The EPA has concluded that requiring dental offices to remove mercury through low-cost and readily available amalgam separators along with best management practices will have the biggest impact on preventing mercury from reaching POTWs. Capturing mercury-laden waste at the source prevents it from being released into the environment. The rule uses best management practices including;

- Installation of approved amalgam separators following recommended maintenance and record keeping.
- Prohibits provider from flushing waste amalgam down a drain
- Prohibits the use of bleach or chlorine-containing cleaners that may lead to the dissolution of solid mercury when cleaning chair-side traps and vacuum lines.

## **Who is affected by this regulation?**

This rule applies to offices, including large institutions such as dental schools and clinics, where dentistry is practiced that discharge to a POTW. It does not apply to mobile units or offices where the practice of dentistry consists only of the following dental specialties: oral pathology, oral and maxillofacial radiology, oral and maxillofacial surgery, orthodontics, periodontics, or prosthodontics.

**Water Resource  
Recovery Facility**  
Administrative Offices  
1300 Market Avenue SW  
Grand Rapids, MI 49503  
Tel: (616) 456-3000  
Fax: (616) 456-3711

**Engineering**  
1900 Oak Industrial Dr. NE  
Grand Rapids, MI 49505  
Tel: (616) 456-3000  
Fax: (616) 456-3138

**Sewer Maintenance**  
660 Market Avenue. SW  
Grand Rapids, MI 49503  
Tel: (616) 456-3000  
Fax: (616) 456-3736

**Stormwater Management**  
1120 Monroe NW  
Grand Rapids, MI 49503  
Tel: (616) 456-3000  
Fax: (616) 456-4088

## **What does this rule require of dental offices?**

Dental offices that discharge to POTWs that do not place or remove amalgam need only submit a one-time certification. Dental offices that place or remove amalgam must operate and maintain an amalgam separator and must not discharge scrap amalgam or use certain kinds of line cleaners. They must also submit a One-Time Compliance Report. The one-time compliance reports are to be submitted to the City of Grand Rapids Industrial Pretreatment Program at the address listed below.

## **What is required of my dental office?**

### **Dental facilities with amalgam separators installed**

Dental facilities that have installed compliant amalgam separators are in compliance until June 14, 2027, or when the amalgam separator needs replacement, whichever comes first. These dental offices are required to submit a one-time compliance report by October 12, 2020, or 90 days after transfer of ownership.

### **Dental facilities without amalgam separators installed**

All non-exempt dental facilities that currently have no amalgam separator installed are required to install a compliant separator by July 14, 2020 and submit a one-time compliance report within 90 days of the installation date.

### **Newly opened dental facilities**

Newly opened dental facilities that begin operating on or after July 14, 2017 are required to install a compliant amalgam separator immediately and submit a one-time compliance report within 90 days of installation.

### **Dentists who do not place amalgam and do not remove amalgam except in limited emergency or unplanned unanticipated circumstances**

Dentists who do not place amalgam and do not remove amalgam except in limited emergency or unplanned unanticipated circumstances (estimated less than 5%) and who certify as such must file a one-time compliance report by October 12, 2020 or 90 days after transfer of ownership. Keep on record for lifetime of practice ownership

## **What is a compliant amalgam separator?**

(1) Installation, operation, and maintenance of one or more amalgam separators that meet the following requirements:

(i) Compliant with either the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) American National Standard/American Dental Association (ADA) Specification 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. Compliance must be assessed by an

accredited testing laboratory under ANSI's accreditation program for product certification or a testing laboratory that is a signatory to the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation's Mutual Recognition Arrangement. The testing laboratory's scope of accreditation must include ANSI/ADA 108-2009 or ISO 11143.

Please reference 40 CFR Part 441 Section 441.30 for more details.

### **Are there dental dischargers that are exempt from this rule?**

Yes, the rule does not apply to the following dental dischargers:

- Dental dischargers that exclusively practice one or more of the following dental specialties: oral pathology, oral and maxillofacial radiology, oral and maxillofacial surgery, orthodontics, periodontics, or prosthodontics.
- Does not apply to wastewater discharges from a mobile unit operated by a dental discharger.
- Does not apply to dental dischargers that do not discharge any amalgam process wastewater to a POTW, such as dental dischargers that collect all dental amalgam process wastewater for transfer to a Centralized Waste Treatment facility as defined in 40 CFR part 437.
- Does not apply to wastewater discharges into a private septic system.

### **Exempt facilities are not required to install an amalgam separator or submit a one time compliance report.**

Please reference the EPA flowchart enclosed with this letter to assist in answering any questions you may have; or you may contact the City of Grand Rapids Industrial Pretreatment Program at 456-3633 and we can assist you. Keep in mind that as long as a dental facility subject to this part is in operation, or until ownership is transferred, the dental facility or an agent or representative of the dental facility must maintain this one time compliance report and make it available for inspection in either physical or electronic form. Full details of the requirements for the one-time compliance report can be found in 40 CFR Part 441.50 Reporting and Recordkeeping Requirements.

### **Return completed compliance reports by mail or fax (electronic copies by email cannot be accepted due to EPA requirements)**

City of Grand Rapids  
Environmental Services Department  
Industrial Pretreatment Program  
1300 Market Ave. S.W.  
Grand Rapids, MI 49503  
Fax number: 456-4423