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## NEW FEDERAL DISCHARGE REGULATIONS APPLICABLE TO NEW AND EXISTING DENTAL FACILITIES

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On July 14, 2017, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) finalized technology-based pretreatment standards under the Clean Water Act to reduce discharges of mercury and other metals from dental offices into municipal sewage treatment plants known as Publicly Owned Treatment Works (POTWs).

Dental offices, which discharge mercury and other metals present in amalgam used for fillings, are the main source of mercury discharges to the POTWs; these metals are subsequently released into the environment. The rule requires dental offices to comply with requirements based on practices recommended by the American Dental Association, including the use of amalgam separators.

This rule applies to dental facilities that discharge to the City of Mesa Sanitary Sewer System from where the practice of dentistry is performed, including large institutions such as dental schools and clinics; permanent or temporary offices, home offices, and facilities; and including dental offices owned and operated by federal, state, or local governments including military bases.

Dental dischargers whose first discharge to the City of Mesa Sewer System occurs after July 14, 2017 are considered a “*New Source*” dental discharger (PSNS 40 CFR 441.40) and must complete this one-time compliance report and submit it no later than 90 days following the introduction of wastewater into the City of Mesa Sewer System.

Dental dischargers that have been in business at the current address on or before July 14, 2017 are considered an “*Existing Source*” dental discharger (PSES 40 CFR 441.30) and must in compliance with the standard by July 14, 2020 and submit a one-time compliance report certifying such by October 12, 2020, or 90 days after a transfer of ownership.



## Exemptions

All exempt dental facilities must certify in a One-Time Compliance Report to the City of Mesa.

1. Dental dischargers that do not place dental amalgam, and do not remove dental amalgam except in limited emergency or unplanned, unanticipated circumstances, (according to the rules this means that, on average, less than 5% of the removal procedures involve dental amalgam, and that the business does not stock amalgam capsules or accept new patients with amalgam fillings).”
2. The final rule does not apply to wastewater discharges from dental offices where the practice of dentistry consists exclusively of one or more of the following dental specialties:  
oral pathology, oral and maxillofacial radiology, oral and maxillofacial surgery, orthodontics, periodontics, or prosthodontics.
3. Mobile Dental Units are exempt from the Dental Amalgam Rule and have no reporting requirements.
4. The final rule does not apply to dental facilities that do not discharge any amalgam process wastewater, through any drains to a Publicly Owned Treatment Works, such as dental facilities that collect all dental amalgam process wastewater for transfer to a Centralized Waste Treatment facility.

For additional information and resources visit:

<https://www.epa.gov/eg/dental-effluent-guidelines>