



# Waste Segregation Guide for Dental Practices



## Common Dental Waste Types & Proper Handling



### BIOHAZARDOUS MEDICAL WASTE

- Types:** Blood-soaked gauze, patient bibs, personal protective equipment (PPE), and other items contaminated with human blood or other potentially infectious materials (OPIM).
- Disposal:** Place in red biohazard bags and dispose of according to state-specific regulations.



### SHARPS WASTE

- Types:** Needles, syringes, scalpel blades, dental wires, and other sharp instruments used in dental procedures that are contaminated with blood or OPIM.
- Disposal:** Must be discarded in Food and Drug Administration-approved, puncture-resistant sharps containers to reduce the risk of accidental injuries and exposure to infectious materials.



### AMALGAM WASTE

- Types:** Amalgam waste contains mercury and silver, both considered hazardous wastes. Additionally, amalgam waste in contact with oral fluids may be biohazardous.
- Disposal:** Use an Amalgam separator to capture mercury and other metals before they are discharged into sewers. Once the mercury is captured by a separator, it can be recycled.



### PHARMACEUTICAL WASTE

- Types:** Expired, unused, or partially used medications.
- Disposal:** Non-hazardous waste pharmaceuticals typically go into blue pharmaceutical waste bins.
- Hazardous waste pharmaceuticals typically are disposed in a black pharmaceutical waste bin.



### CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

- Types:** Patient medical records, x-rays, insurance forms, and any documents containing protected health information (PHI) that is part of a designated record set.
- Disposal:** Use a HIPAA compliant professional secure document and hard drive destruction\* service or another method of rendering PHI indecipherable and irretrievable to prevent unauthorized viewing or access.

\*Contact Shred-it® for service availability.



## Regulatory Compliance & Training

To help ensure safety and compliance, dental practices must provide required training for staff handling medical and hazardous waste.

- **OSHA Bloodborne Pathogens Standard**

Requires initial and annual training for employees who have reasonably anticipated exposure to blood and OPIM that may result from performing their job duties such as handling biohazardous waste. This training plays an important role to help eliminate or minimize exposure to bloodborne pathogens.

- **OSHA Hazard Communication Standard**

Requires training upon hire and when new hazardous chemicals are introduced. Employees must understand the risks and proper handling of hazardous chemicals in their workplace.

- **DOT Hazardous Materials Training**

Requires training within 90 days of becoming a hazmat employee and every three years thereafter for employees who package, transport, or sign shipping papers for hazardous materials.

- **HIPAA Privacy & Security Training**

Required within a reasonable time frame before having access to PHI and highly recommended on an annual basis to ensure compliance with safeguarding PHI and protecting patient confidentiality.

## Ensure Compliance with Expert Support

Dental waste management can be complex, but partnering with a trusted expert like Stericycle helps ensure safe, compliant waste disposal and regulatory adherence. From sharps and pharmaceutical waste to amalgam and confidential document disposal, Stericycle provides comprehensive medical waste management solutions tailored to dental practices.

**Learn more about Stericycle's waste management solutions and resources for dental clinics and practices. For further information, visit [stericycle.com](https://www.stericycle.com) or call 800-783-7422.**