

**NB: Unofficial translation; legally binding texts are those in Finnish and Swedish**

**Ministry of the Environment, Finland**

**No. 112  
GOVERNMENT DECISION  
ON AMALGAM-CONTAINING WASTEWATER AND WASTE RESULTING FROM DENTAL  
CARE**

January 30, 1997

**Section 1**

This Decision contains provisions on discharging amalgam-containing wastewater into waters and public sewerage systems and on the management of amalgam waste.

The Decision applies to dental clinics and other establishments where new amalgam fillings are made or old amalgam fillings removed and which may discharge amalgam into wastewaters or produce amalgam waste.

**Section 2**

Wastewater produced by dental units may only be discharged into waters or public sewerage systems via amalgam separators. Amalgam separators must have an efficiency of at least 95 per cent.

Provisions on the installation, monitoring, maintenance and efficiency determination of amalgam separators are laid down in the Annex to this Decision.

**Section 3**

Amalgam-containing wastewater produced in dental care can be discharged into waters without the permit referred to in section 5 of the Government Decision on the Discharges into Waters of Certain Substances Dangerous to the Environment and Health (363/1994), provided that the provisions of this Decision are complied with. The same applies to amalgam-containing wastewater produced in dental care that is discharged into public sewerage systems.

**Section 4**

Records as provided for by section 51, paragraph 3 of the Waste Act (1072/1993) shall be kept of the amalgam waste and produced in dental care and its delivery for recovery or disposal.

**Section 5**

Monitoring the compliance with this Decision is the responsibility of the supervisory authorities referred to in the Water Act (264/1961) and the Waste Act.

**Section 6**

This Decision comes into force on July 1, 1998.

## Annex

### Installation, monitoring, maintenance and efficiency determination of the amalgam separators

1. An amalgam separator must be installed in the sewer of the high-power suction unit or of the dental unit. A person must be appointed to be responsible for monitoring and maintenance of the separator. The filling level of the amalgam separator's waste container must be checked at least once a month, unless the separator has an alarm which indicates when the container is full. To ensure separator efficiency, the container must be emptied or replaced sufficiently often.

2. The efficiency of amalgam separators installed in dental units taken into use after the entry into force of this Decision shall be determined with method a or b referred to in subparagraph 3. The efficiency of the amalgam separators installed or to be installed in dental units taken into use before the entry into force of this Decision may also be determined using method c.

3. Methods for determining the efficiency of amalgam separators:

a) the method of the German institute of construction technology (Institut für Bautechnik, Bau- und Prüfgrundsätze für Amalgamabscheider, Amalgam-Standardprobe und Quartz-Standardprobe, Fassung November 1989) or any other method that conforms with the equivalent requirements;

b) the method of the Århus dental college (Specifikationer vedrørende afprøvning af amalgamudskillere. Århus tandlægehøjskole. Dansk Tandlægeforening og Tandlægernes Nye Landsforening, 28. juni 1990) or any other method that conforms with the equivalent requirements; and

c) the method of the Swedish government testing institute (Statens provningsanstalt, standardtest för avskiljningsanordning för kvicksilverhaltigt avfall från spillvatten från tandvårdsenheter, 21.10.1980) or any other method that conforms with the equivalent requirements.

4. The efficiency of the amalgam separator must be demonstrated with a certificate showing the test method used and the separator efficiency. The certificate or a copy of it must be available at the establishments referred to in this Decision.

Notified in accordance with Council Directive 83/189/EEC, as amended by Directives 88/182/EEC and 94/10/EC.