

Canada-Wide Standards (CWS) for Mercury Implementation Plan for Saskatchewan

Dental Amalgam Waste

General accountability: Saskatchewan intends to promote the appropriate management of Dental Amalgam Waste so mercury does not enter the environment. Appropriate management may include landfilling in an approved, confined, engineered landfill with leachate collection systems, recycling to either produce reusable materials such as mercury, silver or copper, or for stabilization/immobilization in a form that may be retired permanently.

Milestones and deliverables: Saskatchewan will achieve through “Best Management Practices” a 95 per cent reduction in mercury releases from dental amalgam waste discharges to the environment, by 2005, from the base year of 2000. “Reduction in mercury releases” refers to the amount of mercury, either in the form of elemental mercury or mercury containing compounds, removed from the dental waste stream. “Best Management Practices” are defined as including the use of an International Organization for Standardization (ISO) certified amalgam separator or equivalent to remove mercury from the waste stream.

Public role: Reductions in mercury amalgam is to be pursued primarily via a federal tracking of the dental industry commitments. Therefore, residents and corporations may have a limited role to the achievement of this CWS.

Access to information: Saskatchewan Environment will not directly track mercury amalgam waste or recycling rates that could be accessed by the public, however this information may be made available indirectly through the agencies undertaking this work. The federal government is committed through a Memorandum of Understanding with the Canadian Dental Association to receive amalgam waste management data on an annual basis and to conduct analyses to produce a summary report addressing the reported compliance with the Best Management Practices.

Verifiable progress: Progress in the reduction of dental amalgam is to be pursued primarily via a federal tracking of the dental industry commitments. The annual federal reports as a result of this federal tracking will be reviewed and verified by provincial officials to determine if the dental industry is in compliance within the Province of Saskatchewan.

Co-benefits: The multi-pollutant benefits of this CWS are limited - recycling or disposal does not necessarily have a benefit to the reduction of other emissions. However, the Canada-wide standard is independently beneficial and is a result of the invocation of the precautionary approach where it is recognized that mercury is persistent, bio-accumulative and toxic, even though, there is no evidence of environmental harm resulting from current management of amalgam waste.

