

January 16, 2006

Dear Colleagues,

Many of you may not be aware of the recent office visits by staff of the Monroe County Department of Environmental Services (DES). They are in the process of a voluntary review of office practices and procedures with respect to silver recovery (film processing using fixer), lead recovery and amalgam handling.

We recently held a meeting with the members of the inspection team and were told that ten offices were selected randomly for review to establish a baseline of compliance with existing laws and regulations. We have asked, and the DES staff has agreed, to hold off on further inspections until information can be sent to our members regarding these visits and the expectations to be met.

In 2002 New York State signed a new law, "Use and Recycling of Elemental Mercury and Dental Amalgam by Dentists" and compliance was required starting March 16, 2003. At this time, bills are pending to add a wastewater treatment utilizing an amalgam separator to this law. For now, compliance deals with the handling and disposal of elemental mercury and amalgam (both contact and non-contact with a patient) with proper documentation.

With respect to the issue of silver recovery both the ADA and the NYSDA have endorsed dentists compliance with "Best Management Practices". Dentists are expected to voluntarily comply with these standards for filtration of x-ray processing fixer solution. Documentation of proper handling is also required.

DES is charged with disposal of hazardous materials and safeguarding the waste discharge from wastewater treatment facilities including mandated levels of certain metals. Compliance with these standards will avoid the need for the County to seek a sewer use permit for each office. This will save us the cost of permitting and the required mandatory inspections that each of us would have to comply with. DES offers waste disposal (spent fixer, contact and non-contact amalgam, lead foil, etc.) for a fee at the Household Hazardous Waste Facility and can be contacted to arrange a drop off at 585-760-7553.

Baseline inspections revealed only 20% of offices in full compliance. The DES team is here to guide us in reaching 100% compliance. They have asked, to make these reviews easier for you and your staff, that each office gather documentation of compliance/disposal in one location and appoint an office contact person, either yourself or one of your staff.

Attached are the questionnaire, letter of participation in silver discharge compliance and a summary of regulatory requirements. Additional information is available on the ADA, NY State Department of Environmental Conservation and at the Seventh District Dental Society web sites.

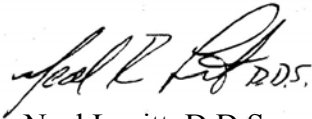
Please be assured these reviews and inspections are aimed at education and bringing our offices into compliance. Deficiencies will be noted and a future re-inspection will be made. There are no enforcement actions or fines planned. The goal is for DES and dental offices to work together to achieve compliance with state and local environmental laws. Working together will help reduce mercury, silver and lead in our environment.

If there are any questions or concerns please contact the Dental Society office or one of us directly.

Thank you for your attention and help.



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