



## ADVISORY

The South African Dental Association Newsletter  
Informing Oral Healthcare Professionals

Bulletin



### SADA Professional Advisory Bulletin

- Industry Updates - VAT, HPCSA CPD Compliance, Annual HPCSA and PCNS renewal is practitioner responsibility
- Update: Mercury regulations, amalgam separators and dentists

**Circulation date: 24 April 2025**

Dear SADA Member

## CLINICAL

### Industry Updates

#### 1. VAT Increase – Effective 1 May 2025

Members are advised of the upcoming increase in Value-Added Tax (VAT) from 15% to 15.5%, effective 1 May 2025. Practitioners who submit claims to medical schemes based on the schemes' published tariffs are reminded that these tariffs are VAT-inclusive. As such, we await the publication of revised tariffs from the respective medical schemes.

Once made available, the updated tariffs will be uploaded to the SADA website for your convenience. Members can access them by navigating to Professional Resources > Clinical Resources > Medical Schemes 2025 (login required).

#### 2. HPCSA CPD Compliance – Extension to 30 June 2025

##### SADA Takes Action on Retrospective CPD Regulation Changes

In response to widespread concern among dental professionals, SADA has formally engaged the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) regarding the recent retrospective changes to Continuing Professional Development (CPD) regulations.

The new rules, which reduce the validity period of Continuing Education Units (CEUs) from 24 months to 12 months with immediate retrospective effect, have left many practitioners at risk of non-compliance—despite having legitimately earned CEUs under the previous regulations.

SADA has written directly to the Registrar, expressing strong concern about the fairness and impact of these changes on our members. In our communication, we emphasized that:

- CEUs earned in good faith under the previous 24-month rule should not be invalidated retroactively.
- Practitioners need a clear and fair transition period to adapt to the new requirements.
- Regulatory changes of this magnitude must involve prior engagement with professional bodies such as SADA.

We continue to advocate for a review of this decision and are calling for an inclusive discussion to safeguard the rights of our members and maintain trust in the CPD system.

As always, SADA remains committed to ensuring that your voice is heard and your professional standing is protected. We will keep members updated on any developments as we engage further with the HPCSA.

### **3. Annual HPCSA and PCNS Renewals – Practitioner Responsibility**

A number of members have reported not receiving annual renewal invoices from either the HPCSA or the Board of Healthcare Funders (BHF) – PCNS department. Please note that neither organization issues invoices directly to practitioners anymore.

It is the responsibility of each practitioner to ensure that annual renewals are completed and paid by 31 March each year.

For HPCSA renewal instructions:


Access the annual renewal guide here:

[HPCSA Annual Renewal Guide \(PDF\)](#)

For PCNS renewal and balance checks:

Visit: <https://www.pcns.co.za/Payment/CheckBalance>

Should you have any queries regarding the above matters, please do not hesitate to contact SADA Clinical Support at [clinical@sada.co.za](mailto:clinical@sada.co.za)



# Dr Francois Meyer SADA BOARD CHAIRPERSON has registered - Have you?



DENTAL & ORAL HEALTH  
CONGRESS AND EXHIBITION  
25 - 27 JULY 2025 | DURBAN INTERNATIONAL  
CONVENTION CENTRE

## LEGAL

### UPDATE: MERCURY REGULATIONS, AMALGAM SEPARATORS AND DENTISTS

#### Background

On 6 February 2025, the Department of Forestry, Fisheries, and the Environment (DFFE) issued final regulations requiring dentists to install amalgam separators by 1 April 2026.

However, on 24 February 2025, these regulations were withdrawn until they are tabled in Parliament. If Parliament is not in session, additional time will be granted.

The regulations were re-published on **31 March 2025** and is now in force.

#### When must dentists install amalgam separators?

The required installation date remains **1 April 2026**.

### **Why do dentists need to install amalgam separators?**

This requirement stems from the Minamata Convention on Mercury, an international treaty aimed at reducing mercury emissions and releases. South Africa signed the Convention in October 2013. Key provisions include:

- Banning bulk mercury use by dental practitioners (2021 decision).
- Requiring countries that have not phased out dental amalgam to submit an action plan or progress report (2023 decision).
- Advising against amalgam use in children under 15, pregnant and breastfeeding women, except when deemed necessary by a dentist.

Globally, dental amalgam accounts for 270–341 metric tons of mercury use annually.

### **How does the Convention impact dentists?**

Dental amalgam is the only mercury-added material in the Convention subject to a phase-down. All other mercury-added materials addressed in the Convention are subject to a ban or phase-out.

The Convention requires signatory countries to implement at least two of nine phase-down measures.

### **Why a phase-down and not a phase-out of dental amalgam?**

Affordable alternatives to dental amalgam are not available everywhere. In many parts of the world, dental amalgam is often the only available resource to repair tooth decay. Therefore, a phase-down, and not a complete phase-out, of this material is provided for. Prohibiting the use of dental amalgam before appropriate alternatives are available would negatively impact oral health from both an individual and population perspective.

South Africa lags far behind SADC nations:

- Mauritius ended amalgam for children in 2014;
- Zambia stopped amalgam use in 2022 by agreement with the dental association.
- Tanzania in 2020 by law phased out all amalgam use.

The European parliament announced it will completely ban dental amalgam from 1 January 2025.

To successfully phase-down dental amalgam, there must be a greater emphasis on prevention, increased research on amalgam alternatives, and best management practices for amalgam waste.

FDI and its members of which SADA is one, partners, and individual dental professionals have a critical role to play in ensuring that the impact of the convention is positive. Dental professionals living in a country that has ratified the Convention need to be aware of the direct impact this will have on their profession.

### **Are dentists unfairly singled out by the regulations?**

No. While the regulations require dental facilities using amalgam to install separators by 1 April 2026, many other industries are also affected.

Annexure A to the regulations contains many industries and mercury added products that are subject to a complete phase out by dates stipulated in the regulations. These include

batteries, with exceptions for zinc-based button batteries with less than 2% mercury content, it bans switches and relays containing mercury, except for certain high-accuracy capacitance and loss measurement bridges and high-frequency switches. There are stipulations for various types of fluorescent lamps, including compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs).

Certain cosmetics, pesticides, biocides, and topical antiseptics containing mercury are also banned from 1 April 2025, as well as certain non-electronic measuring devices where no mercury-free alternative is available. These include barometers, hygrometers, manometers, thermometers, and sphygmomanometer (blood pressure monitors).

The regulations contained a table that affected mercury-added products and the date after which their manufacture, import, and export will not be allowed in South Africa. The regulations restrict the manufacture, import, and export of specific mercury-added products over a three-year period. Some products will be banned from 1 April 2025, while others must be phased out by April 2027.

The use of mercury by dentists in bulk form is not permitted. In addition, the use of dental amalgam for the dental treatment of deciduous teeth of patients under 15 years and of pregnant and breastfeeding women is not allowed, except when considered necessary by the dental practitioner based on the needs of the patient.

#### **Do all dentists need to install amalgam separators?**

No. If a dentist does not place, remove, or extract teeth containing amalgam, they do not need to install a separator.

SADA raised this with the DFFE, and the Department confirmed that dentists could certify in writing that they do not use amalgam. There is no official template, but a signed letter certifying the above will be required during inspections.

#### **What should dentists do now?**

Dentists should start evaluating their options for purchasing and installing amalgam separators **before the 1 April 2026 deadline**.

Should you have any queries regarding the above matters, please do not hesitate to contact SADA Legal & Corporate at [legal@sada.co.za](mailto:legal@sada.co.za)

Yours in oral health

**Dr Tinesha Parbhoo - Head Clinical Support**

**Punkaj Govan - Head Legal and Corporate**

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