



SADA Professional Advisory Bulletin

- Mercury Regulations
- Next Dental Assisting Exam date as advised by HPCSA
- Join the UWC and US Dental Faculty Alumni Engagement Evening

Circulation date: 28 August 2025

Dear Members

CLINICAL

MERCURY REGULATIONS

Thank you to everyone who attended the recent webinar with DRI-SA on Monday, 25 August. For those who were unable to join, we would like to reiterate and clarify some of the key points discussed:

Regulatory Authority

We understand there is ongoing confusion in the industry around the enforcement of mercury-related regulations. It is important to clarify that **SADA is not the regulatory authority**. These regulations stem from South Africa's obligations under the Minamata Convention on Mercury, implemented by the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE). All industries that handle mercury in any form must comply with these national regulations.

Phase-Down vs. Phase-Out

Dentistry is unique in that it is subject to a **phase-down** rather than a full **phase-out** of mercury use. This distinction means dental practitioners may continue to use amalgam under certain conditions but are still required to meet specific regulatory standards.

Compliance Deadlines

The regulations currently stipulate:

- **1 April 2025:** Deadline for the **installation of amalgam separators**.
- **1 April 2026:** These separators must achieve **95% mercury retention efficiency**.
- The September 2025 date mentioned in previous SADA communication refers only to the **expiration of the current DRI-SA offer** (which includes a complimentary amalgam separator) and is **not** a government-imposed regulatory deadline.

Mercury Phase-Down Plan

The regulations also require the submission of a Mercury Phase-Down Plan to the Minister within one year of the regulations coming into effect. We are pleased to share that the

DFFE has confirmed SADA may submit this plan on behalf of our members.

Annual Reporting Requirements

Dentists who have installed amalgam separators are required to submit an annual compliance report to the Director-General by 31 March each year. This must include:

- Proof of installation
- Documentation of compliant amalgam recycling and disposal processes

Turnkey Solution for Compliance

SADA has explored various providers in the market. While other options exist for amalgam separators or waste management services, very few offer a complete, turnkey solution—from installation to certified mercury waste recycling. The solution currently supported by SADA is both compliant and comprehensive. That said, we are actively exploring alternative, cost-effective options and will share any viable solutions with our members as soon as they become available.

Flexibility and Choice

Please note that participation in the DRI-SA offer is entirely optional. Members are encouraged to source solutions that best suit their practice's needs – as long as they remain fully compliant with the regulatory requirements.

Statistics

The placement, removal, and polishing of dental amalgam restorations - as well as the extraction of teeth containing amalgam - produce mercury-containing waste in oral healthcare settings. This waste is typically generated in an open system, which, if not properly managed, can result in the release of up to 50% of the mercury used into the environment.(1) Mercury from dental amalgam enters the environment through several pathways:

Atmosphere: 50–70 tons per year

Surface water: 35–45 tons per year

Groundwater: 20–25 tons per year

Soil: 75–100 tons per year

It is estimated that 40–50 tons of dental amalgam are recycled annually, with an additional 40–50 tons processed through sequestration and secure disposal methods.(2)

The aim of a recent study by Sudi *et al.* (3) was threefold: (i) to determine mercury levels in wastewater; (ii) to assess the implementation of best management practices related to dental amalgam use; and (iii) to examine the procurement patterns of dental amalgam at the Wits Oral Health Centre (WOHC). The study revealed that wastewater samples from the WOHC contained total mercury concentrations ranging from 1.048 mg/L to 108.762 mg/L - exceeding the permissible limits set by the City of Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality Water Services By-laws. Additionally, the findings showed a steady increase in the procurement of dental amalgam over a nine-year period, the majority of which is used for training purposes. The study also identified insufficient adherence to best management practices (BMPs) for the use of dental amalgam.

Access the presentation slides here: [Click to View Slides](#)

To contact DRI-SA directly: Email: info@dri-sa.co.za (Expect a response within 24 hours.)

For technical queries regarding installation or waste disposal:

Please get in touch with **Wrights** at: L.vanSittert@wright-millners.co.za

We hope this bulletin provides the clarity and guidance needed during this transitional period. SADA remains committed to supporting our members and ensuring you are well-informed and well-prepared.

References:

1. Drummond JL, Cailas MD, Croke K. Mercury generation potential from dental waste amalgam. J Dent. 2003 Sep;31(7):493-501.
2. United Nations Environment Programme. Lessons from Countries Phasing Down Dental Amalgam Use. 2016; Available from: <https://wedocs.unep.org/20.500.11822/31212>
3. Sudi, Stephen M, & Naidoo, Sudeshni. (2024). Mercury levels in wastewater samples at a South African dental school. South African Dental Journal, 79(9), 470-475. <https://doi.org/10.17159/sadj.v79i09.19169>

LEGAL

NEXT DENTAL ASSISTING EXAM DATE AS ADVISED BY HPCSA

Please note the Dental Assisting Board Examination will be on Thursday 27 November 2025 for qualifying practitioners.

The closing date for applications is Friday 3 October 2025.

Documentation can be downloaded from SADA website

[HPCSA FORM 322 EXAMINATION PREPARATION GUIDE - MAY 2017.docx](#)

[HPCSA FORM 324 APPLICATION FORM.doc](#)

Yours in oral health

Dr Tinesha Parbhoo - Head Clinical Support



THE APPLE SHOULDN'T FALL
TOO FAR FROM THE TREE



FACULTY
of DENTISTRY
UNIVERSITY of the
WESTERN CAPE



HELLO!

As alumni of the Faculty of Dentistry from both Stellenbosch (US) and UWC, you are part of a thriving legacy that continues to shape the future of oral health care. Just as the apple doesn't fall far from the tree, your contributions can directly support the next generation of students, helping them grow and thrive under the same tree of

 **knowledge that once nurtured you.**

**JOIN THE UWC
& US DENTAL
FACULTY
ALUMNI
ENGAGEMENT
EVENING**

**READY
TO HELP
US
GROW?**



THE APPLE OF OUR EYE: YOU!

We're inviting all dentistry graduates from the University of Stellenbosch (US) and the University of the Western Cape (UWC) to an interactive evening with the UWC Faculty of Dentistry leadership and an Ethics presentation.

Date: Wednesday, 17 September 2025

Time: 18H00

Venue: Main Lecture Hall, D-Floor,
Tygerberg Oral Health Centre

CPD: 2 Ethics points

Refreshments will be served.

Limited seating available.

Register here to confirm your seat.

For more information contact:
Dr WP van Zyl wwwanzyl@uwc.ac.za



[@uwc_faculty_of_dentistry](https://www.instagram.com/uwc_faculty_of_dentistry)

Register Now - Faculty Alumni Engagement Evening

19
Sep

SADA Western Cape Branch (WC066) - 19 & 20 September 2025

20
Sep

SADA Gauteng South Branch (GS073) - 20 September 2025

08
Oct

SADA Algoa Midlands (AM034) - 8 October 2025

24
Oct

SADA Mpumalanga Branch – Skukuza CPD Weekend - 24 & 25 October 2025 (MP021)

21
Aug

2026 SADA Dental & Oral Health Congress and Exhibition

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