Management of Amalgam Waste

The dental amalgam and other dental office wastes are inspected by Toxics Management on a three year cycle for proper management and disposal.

*Below is from state Toxics (DTSC)*

http://www.dtsc.ca.gov/informationresources/upload/oad_docvet_fs.pdf

The lead foil from dental x-ray film, lead blankets and lead film storage boxes are considered to be scrap metal if they are sent to a metal recycler, but they are hazardous wastes if you dispose of them. Most metal recyclers accept lead scrap. Dental amalgam is nearly 50% mercury, a metal that is a hazardous waste constituent and may be managed under the universal waste management standards or as fully regulated hazardous waste. Because amalgam contains mercury, copper and zinc, the amalgam cannot be considered an exempt silver-only waste.

Extracted teeth that have amalgam fillings will likely be hazardous waste. Many scrap amalgam recyclers accept teeth with amalgam as long as the sender certifies that they are not infectious wastes. Extracted teeth without attached tissue are considered non-infectious wastes, unless the extracted teeth are deemed infectious or biohazardous waste by the attending surgeon or dentist.

Changes to the universal waste regulations now allow unused mercury, scrap amalgam, extracted teeth with amalgam fillings, chair traps, sink traps and filters containing amalgam to be handled under the universal waste management standards rather than full hazardous wastes standards. "Managing Universal Waste in California" for details on management standards for amalgam and other universal wastes. Empty amalgam capsules are not considered hazardous waste and may be disposed of with solid waste. Check the DTSC publication.