



Greater efficiency supports patient care.

Waste Management and Recycling

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Description

Best practices for managing waste, recycling, setting reduction goals and reducing the costs and environmental impacts from health care-generated waste. Since most of the materials procured by a health care facility becomes waste, having a proper management program can go a long way when evaluating your supply chain budget.

Project Talking Points

- Tracking waste and recycling at your facility.
- Setting baselines, goals and strategies to lower waste generation and costs.
- Developing resources that guide individuals to be conscious of their waste prevention and recycling behaviors.
- Identifying what can be recycled or reused to reduce waste production and the impact on the environment.
- Identifying the waste streams present in your facility.
- Understanding techniques for waste minimization, which include reduction and recycling/reusing.

Benefits

- **Cost benefits:** Waste prevention, reduction and recycling can lead to lower costs in waste disposal. Tracking the life cycle of resources can help identify the largest waste streams in your facility and where recycling/trash signage and purchasing considerations will make the greatest impact. Managing supplies can lead to less waste and the total cost of inventory down the line.
- **Environmental benefits:** Evaluating the life cycle of materials in your facility indicates where waste can be reduced with the help of recycling programs and member education on how to be more sustainable. Preventing waste generation leads to less wasteful clinical practices which have less impact on the environment and create fewer greenhouse gas emissions.
- **Social benefits:** Developing a waste management program within your facility shows staff, patients and the public that you are committed to reducing your impact on the

community's environment by operating more efficiently. Implementing a program like this improves your public image as a health care organization and, more importantly, improves public health by prioritizing proper disposal and sanitation.

Purchasing Considerations

- Using cost-effective tools like Microsoft Excel or the waste feature in the ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager.
- Implementing a recycling program can have costs associated with recycling services and creating educational materials for staff and visitors.
- Evaluating the life cycle of materials in your facility can highlight where funds are being wasted on unused resources and help to improve your ordering practices.

How-To

1. Determine which department or team is going to handle the waste management and recycling programs. Appropriate departments are generally environmental services, purchasing or facility management.
2. Gain leadership commitment to a waste management program with leaders who will collaborate with your designated team.
3. Classify the types of waste at your facility as well as the approximate quantity and the rate of generation.
 - Construction and demolition waste
 - Solid waste
 - Food waste
 - Pharmaceutical waste
 - Hazardous waste
 - Infectious waste
 - Medical waste
4. Categorize the types of waste at your facility by whether they can be reduced from the source, reused, recycled or composted.
 - Reduced: Conscious "green" purchasing, inventory tracking, procuring reusable/recycled products or products with minimal packaging.
 - Recycled: Office paper, newspapers, aluminum cans, glass, construction waste, batteries, etc.
 - Composted: Kitchen waste, yard waste, compostable utensils.
5. Research regulatory compliances in your city and state for each waste stream.
6. Understand what materials in your facility are classified as reusable and non-reusable based on health/sterilization requirements.

7. Develop a cost-benefit analysis for how a recycling program would help reduce costs in waste removal. Costs for a recycling program can be justified by determining the savings that would come from a percentage reduction in waste removal. It is important to identify and prioritize waste with the greatest minimization potential.
8. Research services that are available in your area for waste and recycling management. Many waste management partners can provide reports with the amount of waste and recycling collected to help with tracking your facility's progress. A provider that specializes in general waste and recycling as well as infectious waste would be the best fit for a health care organization.
9. Develop goals for the waste management and recycling program that are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely.
 - Refer to [American Hospital Association Green Light Projects for Waste](#) for waste- and recycling-related project ideas.
10. Track your progress against a baseline to report on waste reduction and diversion rates.
11. Celebrate the success of your waste and recycling management program and share results with staff and the public.

Resources

- [Thinking Outside the Box: Exploring Non-Profit Partnerships to Expand Hospital Plastics Recycling](#) case study
 - Highlights the hospital-led recycling programs and partnerships at Kaiser Permanente and the Cleveland Clinic.
 - Kaiser Permanente partnered with Goodwill Industries to utilize their recycling options for electronics, bottles and cans, cardboard and plastics, and document destruction at several of their medical centers.
 - The Cleveland Clinic partnered with Rumpke Recycling and Buckeye Industries to develop a method for better collecting materials in the system's surgical suite ORs. Different colored bags were placed in each OR for staff to dispose materials depending on if they were recyclable or needed to be compacted for landfill.
- [EPA Waste Reduction Model \(WARM\)](#)
- [EPA Treatment and Disposal of Medical Waste](#)
- [American Hospital Association Sustainability Roadmap Waste Tracking Tool](#)
- [Energy Star Portfolio Manager: Getting Started with Waste Benchmarking](#)
- [AHE Guidebook for Hospital Waste Reduction and Program Implementation](#)
- [American Hospital Association Green Light Projects for Waste](#)

Regulations, Codes and Standards, Policies

- [State by State Regulated Medical Waste Resource Locator](#)

ECM Synergies

- Selecting the Right Sustainability KPIs

Energy Conservation Measures Descriptors

Category List:

- Building and Maintenance
- Contracted Services

ECM Attributes:

- Optimize Operations
- Waste Management
- Goal Setting

Improvement Type:

- Operations and Maintenance
- Data Accuracy

Department:

- Facilities Management

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