PVC recovery
IN HOSPITALS

'We recycle so much at home – let's do it in the hospital. It's so easy with the bins provided'

Jessica Andrews, ANUM Recovery, Western Hospital

GUIDE FOR STAFF IN CLINICAL AREAS

Plan

1. Are staff interested in recycling waste and willing to take the necessary action?
2. Who is/are the project champion(s)?
3. Which departments of the hospital will be included?
4. Which PVC products will be recovered?
5. What volume of these products is usually consumed in these areas?
6. Is space available for PVC Recovery bins to be readily at hand?

Share this information with the waste management team and discuss how to commence an initial trial.

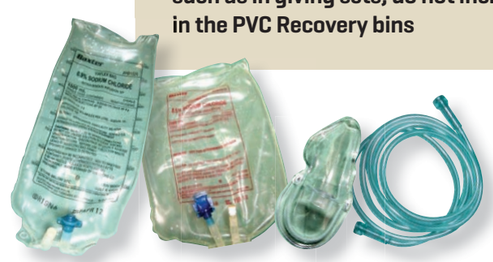
Education and engagement

Implementing a recycling program at any place of work and at home requires education to change behaviours. People have been used to doing things in a certain way for a long time and it will take time for people to adjust to a new system. Therefore a process of continually engaging staff in how to implement the PVC Recovery program will be required. Repeated short presentations at staff meetings and staff inductions using the PVC Recovery video will help to remind people how to recycle PVC waste effectively.

The video and copies of this guide are available online. Education may be reinforced with feedback on progress, celebrating success and recognising waste champions.

REMEMBER

- **Remove elastic straps and metal clips from oxygen masks**
- **Drain IV solutions from bags before disposal and remove hard plastic inserts**
- **If there are numerous components made of hard plastics and other materials, such as in giving sets, do not include it in the PVC Recovery bins**



Issues to be aware of

The key challenges in implementing recycling programs are generally behaviour, storage space for waste and bins and the logistics of moving waste. Good planning, ongoing education and liaison with the hospital's waste management team and contractors may overcome these; however the following issues may also need addressing:

INFECTION CONTROL

Infection control from medical waste is usually well managed in hospitals and staff are trained in medical waste handling. Clearly no material which is potentially infected should be placed in recycling bins. If there is any doubt about a waste PVC product, it should not be placed in the recycling bin.

RESISTANCE TO CHANGE

Some staff may not be interested in recycling, despite several education sessions. It is preferable that these staff place their 'waste' into the general bins rather than contaminate the recycling bins and the effort of other staff.

CONTAMINATION BY OTHER MATERIALS

It only takes a few non-PVC items in the recycling bin to result in the whole bin of material being non-recyclable. Continually engaging staff in implementing good recycling practices will minimise this risk.

IF IN DOUBT, LEAVE IT OUT!

If there is any doubt about the product type or the plastic type, do not place it in the PVC Recovery bin.

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'50 million IV bags go from hospitals into landfill every year. We can recycle the lot... here in Australia'

Colin Marks, Director, SRM Plastics

GUIDE FOR HOSPITAL WASTE MANAGEMENT TEAMS

Plan

1. What volume of PVC product waste is expected to be recovered?
2. How many bins will be required (allowing for full/empty rotations)? Who will supply them? Some waste contractors supply bins, or hospitals may order their own. Choose a specific bin colour so that the PVC Recovery bins are clearly identifiable and instantly recognisable by staff.
3. Is space available for PVC Recovery bins to be readily at hand?
4. Is space available to store collected PVC until transported off-site? Is compaction and/or bulk storage available? Does it need to be considered?
5. Which waste contractor/recycler will be engaged? Have they confirmed the waste will be sent to a local recycler?
6. Will the contractor take only the waste or the full bins?
7. Have PVC Recovery bin identification stickers been ordered? Contact Baxter Healthcare, your recycler or the Vinyl Council of Australia.
8. Has the waste/recycler contractor been asked to measure and provide data on collections?

Share this information with the PVC Recovery team and discuss how to commence an initial trial.

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The key challenges in implementing recycling programs are generally behaviour, storage space for waste and bins and the logistics of moving waste.

INSUFFICIENT BINS AVAILABLE

The amount of PVC recovered and diverted from landfill will be limited by the number of bins available for waste collection, the effort of staff and the frequency of bin rotations and collection. Because implementing this program requires behaviour change by staff in disposing of waste, it is important to provide sufficient bins and appropriate frequency of bin rotations through the collection areas to avoid a "stop-start" program which would discourage staff in their efforts.

STORAGE OF WASTE

Depending on the volume of collections and the hospital location, full bins may need to be stored for 2-4 weeks before collection, or bins emptied into bulk bags or storage. Discuss the collection and transportation options with waste/recycling contractors.

No manual handling of the material should occur after the PVC items enter the bins.

Good planning, ongoing education and liaison between hospital's waste management team, staff in clinical areas and contractors may overcome these challenges.

Support

For any inquiries or assistance in arranging collection and recycling of PVC medical waste, please email the Vinyl Council of Australia info@vinyl.org.au or Baxter at ANZ_SHS_Sustainability@baxter.com.

Register

Register your PVC Recovery Program with the Vinyl Council at www.vinyl.org.au/PVCRecovery or by emailing info@vinyl.org.au.