

Pacific Northwest hospitals learn critical components of managing offsite waste streams

[Michael Geller](#), manager of regional sustainability at Providence Health & Services in Portland, shares insights with hospital networks that are acquiring offsite locations and want to know how to meet safety and compliance objectives amid a complex regulatory environment, financial pressures and sustainability expectations.

The lessons conveyed by Geller for appropriately [managing waste stream regulations at offsite locations](#) shed light on waste stream management specific to the Pacific Northwest. If properly incorporated into a network's waste stream strategy, these guidelines not only help hospitals meet safety and compliance objectives, they can help hospital administration minimize risk and realize operational efficiencies.

For example, co-mingling non-RCRA (or non-hazardous) pharmaceutical waste and sharps waste in the same reusable container meets EPA and DEA requirements in this region. Considering that typically 95 percent of pharmaceutical waste is non-hazardous, this approach can be a huge benefit to health care systems. Staff time is dramatically reduced, as environmental services teams no longer have to collect and dispose of containers. Stericycle technicians manage the proactive container exchange.

Appropriately [managing waste streams across hospitals and offsites](#) includes three major elements of:

- **Considering the unique compliance challenges presented by offsite locations:** Standardized training across locations will best help health care networks maintain system-wide compliance. Safe, proactive waste stream management services and associated processes and protocols must be adopted by all staff to meet guidelines set across multiple regulatory bodies to avoid risk and fines. Site-specific checklists and reports are priorities.
- **Understanding and incorporating regional regulations:** Thorough understanding of the region's guidelines help a network maintain compliance, and also help it find the best strategy to effectively manage waste and minimize risk. Trusted third-party partners can be very valuable in surfacing region-specific guidelines that apply to your entire network.
- **Developing a clear approach to pharmaceutical waste compliance:** Commit to safe, compliant and sustainable programs. This includes educating staff, and using reusable waste containers with a proactive exchange service to lower environmental impact.

To learn more about offsite compliance solutions in a 30-minute webinar, click [here](#).