



Key Tips for Safe and Effective Prescription Drug Disposal

Disposing of unused medication is a common task in health care, however, without a well-oiled drug disposal program, organizations may fall short of compliance standards. The good news is that starting up a comprehensive pharmaceutical drug disposal program does not have to be difficult.

Here are three key tips organizations should consider as part of their program to ensure **compliant, safe and effective** drug disposal:



Determine Pharmaceutical Waste Characterization

Pharmaceutical waste can be divided into two broad categories: hazardous and non-hazardous. Staff should closely inspect all areas of the facility to determine what drug waste exists and how items are disposed when they become waste. Organizations can seek outside resources, such as those found on the EPA and other third-party websites, to learn what **types of drugs an organization has onsite and for assistance with this review.**



Obtain and Distribute Appropriate Drug Containers

The kinds of pharmaceutical drug waste an organization generates will point to the correct drug containers for disposal. For example, hazardous drugs require containers that are properly marked to collect hazardous waste, and incompatible or conflicting hazardous wastes should have separate containers to prevent potential chemical reactions. Organizations using only non-hazardous drugs can throw waste away in containers meant for non-hazardous disposal.



Train Staff to Properly Dispose of Pharmaceutical Waste

Oftentimes staff members—specifically those in smaller physician practices—don't know where to dispose of unused medication and the requirements associated with improper disposal, underscoring the importance of staff education around the **appropriate methods for pharmaceutical waste disposal.** To sustain compliance, training should be convenient and comprehensive for all staff members. Online tools, posters displayed near drug waste containers, and timely reminders and alerts can all be helpful in getting staff up-to-date and reminded of the rules throughout the year.

Committing to a Safe Drug Disposal Program

By following these tips and making the commitment to create a robust pharmaceutical drug disposal program, organizations can implement systems and processes to make drug disposal easy, safe and effective—all while remaining compliant.

Partnering with a trusted organization like Stericycle can take your organization's pharmaceutical drug disposal program to the next level, and contribute to the safety of staff members and the environment.

CLICK HERE to learn more or call 844.700.8930.