



Bringing Compliance Down to Size

With the host of laws and regulations governing healthcare organization operations, it is no wonder facilities often struggle with maintaining regulatory compliance. Between medical waste disposal requirements, [HIPAA](#) rules, [OSHA](#) standards and other state and federal legislation, there is a lot to keep track of. Without a solid program, organizations can quickly overwhelm staff with compliance tasks, but still not fully meet applicable rules and regulations. Not only does this put the organization at risk for penalties and other negative outcomes, but it frustrates staff; too much compliance work pulls them away from direct patient care.

Despite the challenges, consistent compliance is possible. By following the four steps below, organizations can reliably and efficiently meet relevant standards without overtaxing staff in the process.

STEP 1 | Learn What Applies

Before implementing a compliance program, organizations must understand the requirements pertinent to them. Although there are online resources from federal and state agencies that can help, working with a company like Stericycle is an easier way to make sure you don't overlook any essential rules. We have deep experience in multiple regulatory areas and can provide critical insight into what rules apply to you specifically. We are thoroughly integrated in communities across the country, so we can assist you in understanding the nuances of different requirements at the local, state and federal levels. In addition, we keep our fingers on the pulse of various regulations, notifying our clients when new rules emerge or there are changes to existing laws of which they should be aware.

STEP 2 | Conduct a Gap Analysis

Once you figure out what regulations apply, then it's time to assess where your organization stands compared to the rules. By comparing each regulation to your current processes, policies and procedures, you can start to see where your organization excels and where it has room to improve. Although this gap analysis may seem daunting given the scope of these regulations, Stericycle can help, providing tools to streamline the effort, as well as expert consultants to guide the work.

STEP 3 | Address Any Shortfalls

After determining where the gaps are, then you can revamp processes, policies and procedures to ensure tighter compliance. For example, federal OSHA requirements dictate that organizations must have detailed written policies that outline the staff safety risks present in an organization, including needle sticks, exposure to dangerous chemicals and so on. The document must also describe how the organization plans to address these risks. If after reviewing your current policy you decide it could use a refresh, Stericycle can ensure the new document includes all the necessary information. Or, if your organization does not have a policy at all, we can help you create one, offering templates to start the process, as well as input on how to refine the document to include the required data.

STEP 4 | Provide Comprehensive Training

For staff to remain focused on compliance, they must understand what the requirements are and their roles in meeting them. By leveraging online training tools, like those offered by Stericycle through MyStericycle.com, organizations can ensure their staff are up to speed on the topics covered. Plus, the convenience of these resources allows staff to access them anytime and anywhere, giving them the flexibility they need to learn about a topic while still saving time for high-touch patient care.



The Benefits of a Team Approach

Realizing consistent compliance requires dedication and hard work, but it is not something organizations have to do alone. By partnering with Stericycle, you can be confident you are in tune with the current requirements and any changes that arise. Your processes will meet the regulations and your training materials will keep staff in the know. With our expansive knowledge and expertise, we stand ready to assist you in whatever way you need.

California: A Highly-Regulated State

Maintaining compliance can be especially challenging in highly-regulated states in which the requirements delve into even more detail than at the federal level. Take California, for example. With state-specific regulations covering waste management, pharmaceutical disposal, HIPAA compliance and OSHA standards, the state wants to ensure all healthcare organizations are focused on safety, security and a healthful environment.

By working with Stericycle, organizations in California can ensure they:

- Fully understand the state's numerous requirements, including its 50-page medical waste management act that covers everything from disposal and storage to processing and labeling.
- Correctly apply to be a generator of medical waste—a process that the state requires of every medical waste generator.
- Are better prepared for when an auditor comes onsite—organizations must be ready.
- Appreciate the differences between regulated medical waste and pharmaceutical waste and how to correctly dispose of both.

For more information about how Stericycle can help your organization stay on top of compliance, go to stericycle.com/services/compliance.