

cencora



Sustainability tips for  
community practices



## Table of contents

Our commitment	3
Recycling and repurposing	4
Establishing a recycling program	5
Managing medical waste	6
Reducing energy and water use	7
Minimizing paper use	8

# We are united in our responsibility to create healthier futures

## Practicing resilient and sustainable operations together

Healthier futures start with the health of our people and planet, which is why we are committed to reducing waste and limiting our environmental impact as much as possible. We take practical, manageable steps to minimize our footprint and are focused on helping our customers do the same.

This document compiles tips from community physician practices across the country, along with other common procedures, for enabling resilient and sustainable operations.



**Reduce waste**



**Increase efficiency**



**Save money**

To learn more about how Cencora is committed to building partnerships and operations that prioritize the health of our people and planet, visit [esg.cencora.com](https://esg.cencora.com).

# Recycling and repurposing coolers

**We package orders in accordance with manufacturer guidelines. Our expanded polystyrene (EPS) foam coolers are a safe way to deliver products that require controlled temperatures. Although we recognize that it is not possible to ship these coolers back to us, there are a few common ways that practices can recycle or reuse them.**

## **Recycle**

With an average overall recycling rate of 28 percent<sup>1</sup>, EPS packaging is an excellent material for recycling. Earth911.com and EPSPackaging.org have details on which sites accept EPS for recycling, and a mail-back program arranged by the EPS industry.

## **Reuse**

Many practices share coolers amongst their staff for a variety of purposes including to package lunches for travel or other personal uses.

## **Combine orders**

Some practices have developed processes to place larger, less frequent orders when possible, to reduce the overall amount of packaging used.

## **Donate**

Many non-profit organizations need coolers to deliver meals to those in need. For example, Meals on Wheels or other similar local programs.

## **National recycling resources**

The National Recycling Coalition is a non-profit organization that is focused on the promotion and enhancement of recycling in the United States.

[www.nrcrecycles.org](http://www.nrcrecycles.org)

The Recycled Products Purchasing Cooperative is a non-profit program dedicated to natural resource conservation. Their goal is to increase the use of recycled paper on a national basis.

[www.recycledproducts.org](http://www.recycledproducts.org)

### **Resources**

1. <https://eps-airpop.dk/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Global-recycling-of-EPS-december-2022.pdf>

# Consider establishing a recycling program at your practice

**Building productive recycling habits into your daily processes doesn't have to be complicated. Community practices can follow these six steps to start an internal recycling program.**

- 01** Designate a coordinator to oversee the program. This person should manage contractors, logistic details and help colleagues understand the program.
- 02** Find a waste paper hauler or recycler in your area. In many cases you can start with your current waste management company.
- 03** Identify collection and storage needs. Make recycling easy. Identify places where recycling baskets will be most used, perhaps at each desk and exam room. Identify space for waste paper to be stored between pick-ups.
- 04** Involve and educate your staff. Give team members concise information on what and how to recycle. Encourage your leadership team to be vocal in their support.
- 05** Promote the program. Share announcements about the program before it begins and then regular memos updating the success.
- 06** Building productive recycling habits into your daily processes doesn't have to be complicated. Community practices can follow these six steps to start an internal recycling program.

An aerial photograph of a river. The left side of the river is a vibrant green, while the right side is a muddy brown. A dam is visible in the center, and a small boat is on the water. The title 'Managing medical waste' is overlaid in white text on the green part of the image.

# Managing medical waste

**Properly managing medical waste should be a top priority for your practice. We encourage you to keep up on the latest regulatory guidance around medical waste management to ensure compliance with state and federal governing agencies.**

**State and federal governing agencies:**

**State Medical Waste Programs and Regulations**

[www3.epa.gov/epawaste/nonhaz/industrial/medical/programs.htm](http://www3.epa.gov/epawaste/nonhaz/industrial/medical/programs.htm)

**EPA Medical Waste Publications**

[www3.epa.gov/epawaste/nonhaz/industrial/medical/publications.htm](http://www3.epa.gov/epawaste/nonhaz/industrial/medical/publications.htm)

**OSHA Standards for Medical Offices**

[www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3187/osha3187.html](http://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3187/osha3187.html)

**FDA Regulations on Medical Devices**

[www.fda.gov/MedicalDevices/DeviceRegulationandGuidance/overview/default.htm](http://www.fda.gov/MedicalDevices/DeviceRegulationandGuidance/overview/default.htm)

# Reducing energy and water use

**Energy costs typically fall within the top three expenses for businesses. Reducing energy use where possible is beneficial for your practice as well as the environment. Below are some tips for tracking and optimizing your energy use.**

## Track and measure energy use

Some practices use Energy Star's Portfolio Manager, an online tool which tracks energy and water consumption, as well as greenhouse gas emissions. A big advantage of this tool is that you can measure your practice's energy efficiency against other buildings of a similar size.

See the 'For Your Business' section on [www.energystar.gov](http://www.energystar.gov).

## Invest to save

Leaving computers and monitors turned on overnight can be costly. Simple reminders to staff to turn them off when not in use costs nothing but can add up to a sizable saving over the year.

In addition, it can sometimes make sense to replace older computers with more energy-efficient newer models.

Electricity can account for roughly 60 percent of a building's energy use<sup>1</sup>. Energy Star advises, "Upgrading lighting systems with efficient light sources, fixtures, and controls can reduce lighting energy use, improve the visual environment, and affect the sizing of HVAC and electrical systems." Consider motion-sensor interior light switches if installing new lighting.

If your state allows competition in gas and electric services, it's beneficial to shop around for the deal that best fits your practice needs. Your local Chamber of Commerce can help.

## Saving water

Water conservation and safety should be a priority. We have a unique obligation to address chemicals from pharmaceuticals that may be entering the water supply.

Larger practice groups should consider getting a commercial water audit to identify how they use water, where it's being wasted, and where savings can be made. Some water utility companies provide free audits to commercial customers.

The installation of low-flow toilets can cut water usage up to 40 percent<sup>2</sup>. Some manufacturers have return-on-investment calculators online to help you estimate the potential savings.

### Energy efficiency resources

Practice Greenhealth is a non-profit membership organization which offers environmental solutions and support for the healthcare sector.

[www.practicegreenhealth.org](http://www.practicegreenhealth.org)

The EPA's Energy Star program helps businesses and individuals save money and protect the climate through superior energy efficiency.

[www.energystar.gov](http://www.energystar.gov)

# Minimizing paper use

## Prioritize digital documentation

Export documents as PDFs and post them online, email them, or send larger files via a free web file transfer service. You can also use platforms like DocuSign or Jotform as an online form management solution.

Train staff to use your organization's intranet and shared drives as the preferred means of document storage and communication, so your organization can retrieve documents more easily, save time, and reduce costs.

If physical documentation is required, adjust your documents to use as few pages as possible. Consider reducing the font size and using lighter weight or recycled paper when appropriate.

## Maintain current distribution lists

Organizations that keep up-to-date distribution lists realize great savings on paper, postage, and staff time. The United States Postal Service (USPS) runs a National Change of Address program which helps organizations maintain current addresses for customers.

## Reduce your junk mail

Many companies spend too much time sorting and delivering junk mail, and it adds to their waste disposal costs. Use online resources such as [dmachoice.org](http://dmachoice.org) or [catalogchoice.org](http://catalogchoice.org) to opt-out of unwanted direct marketing campaigns.

### Resources

1. <https://www.eia.gov/energyexplained/use-of-energy/commercial-buildings.php>
2. <https://www.gao.gov/assets/rced-00-232.pdf>



