



Community physician practices across the country have shared with us their best tips for being a 'green practice': reducing waste, increasing efficiency and saving money.

Recycling and Repurposing

Besse Medical Coolers

We take great pains to ensure your order reaches you safely and packaged in accordance with each manufacturer's guidelines. Our expanded polystyrene (EPS) foam coolers are the best way to delivery quality products that need controlled temperatures. But we know that it is not possible for you to ship the coolers back to us for reuse, so we recommend that you recycle or reuse them in these ways:

Recycling. EPS packaging is an excellent material for recycling, with an average recycling rate of 15 percent, one of the highest of the plastics family. Earth911.com and EPSPackaging.org have details of sites which accept EPS for recycling, and a mail-back program arranged by the EPS industry.

Reusing. Many practices share the coolers around staff to use personally. Use them to bring in lunch, or give them to family and friends for picnics and travelling.

Combining orders. Some practices have developed a process to place larger, less frequent orders – this reduces the overall amount of packaging used.

Donating. Many local non-profit organizations need coolers to deliver meals to those in need; ask your local Meals on Wheels program.

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

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



Green Practice Recycling Program

Thank you to the practices which helped us put together this suggested program for improving office recycling:

- 1 Designate a co-ordinator** to oversee the program. This person should manage contractors, logistic details and help colleagues understand the program.
- 2 Find a waste paper hauler/recycler** in your area. In many cases you can start with your current waste management company.
- 3 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.
- 4 Involve and educate your staff.** Give employees concise information of what and how to recycle, and make sure that your leadership team are vocal in their support.
- 5 Promote the program.** Give employees several announcements about the program before it begins, and then regular memos updating the success.
- 6 Give incentives.** Use some of the cost savings from the recycling program toward employee incentives, such as gift certificates or employee appreciation meals.

Managing Medical Waste

Besse Medical helps practices dispose of biohazard materials and pharmaceutical waste by offering the Sharps Disposal by Mail System, the first complete disposal system for simplified management of used needles, syringes and other small-quantity medical waste.

We encourage practices to keep up on recent regulatory change, to make sure you are in compliance with the governing agencies in your state.

State Medical Waste Programs and Regulations

www3.epa.gov/epawaste/nonhaz/industrial/medical/programs.htm

EPA Medical Waste Publications

www3.epa.gov/epawaste/nonhaz/industrial/medical/publications.htm

OSHA Standards for Medical Offices

www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3187/osha3187.html

FDA Regulations on Medical Devices

www.fda.gov/MedicalDevices/DeviceRegulationandGuidance/overview/default.htm



Reducing Energy and Water Use

Energy costs typically fall within the top three expenses for businesses, so it makes financial sense to reduce energy use where possible – quite apart from the benefit that brings for the environment.

Track and Measure Energy Use to Identify Areas of Inefficiency.

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 popular tool is that you can measure your practice's energy efficiency against other buildings of a similar size.

See 'For Your Business' section on www.energystar.gov.

Invest to Save

It can sometimes make sense to replace older computers with more energy-efficient newer models. And whatever their age, don't forget the cost of leaving computers and monitors turned on overnight. Simple reminders to staff to turn them off when not in use cost nothing but can add up to a sizeable saving over the year.

Lighting can consume up to a third of the energy used in an office building. It can also affect other building systems through the heat it produces.

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.

Shop around for the best deals for your supplier, if your state allows competition in gas and electric services. Your local Chamber of Commerce can help.

Saving Water

With water bills rising and water shortages becoming more common, we all need to make water conservation a priority. And of course the medical industry has a unique obligation to address the chemicals from pharmaceuticals that are 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. According to the EPA, a leaking toilet alone can cost an estimated \$2,100 per year!

The installation of low-flow faucets and toilets can cut water usage in half, sometimes up to 75 percent. Some manufacturers have return-on-investment calculators online to help you estimate the potential savings.

Energy Efficiency Resources

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

The Sustainability Roadmap helps healthcare organizations map their journey on the road to sustainability. www.sustainabilityroadmap.org

Minimizing Paper Use

Adjust your documents to make them use fewer

pages: consider reducing the font size and amount of white space, printing on both sides of the paper and using lighter weight paper.

... or don't print them at all. Export documents as PDFs and post them online, email them, or send larger files via a free web file transfer service.

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

Conduct business with customers and suppliers on-line, using the internet or a corporate extranet.

Share documents internally on your corporate intranet and shared drives. Use for databases, manuals, minutes, internal phone books, newsletters and other common documents. 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.

Put forms on-line. There are many software options available to do this but you can also use MS Word or Adobe PDF.

Reduce your junk mail. Many companies spend too much time sorting and delivering junk mail, and it adds to their waste disposal costs. Opt out of direct marketing via these websites: www.dmachoice.org and www.catalogchoice.org



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