



Circular Economy Best Practices Checklist

For PPE use in health care facilities

Leadership

Does your hospital-wide Sustainability Strategy approved by senior leadership include:

- ☐ Goals to reduce waste and greenhouse gases (GHG)
- ☐ Full-time Sustainability Staff/Coordinator
- ☐ Green Team/Committee
- ☐ Green/sustainable product purchasing policies
- ☐ Formal policy/guidance to address excessive glove use
- ☐ Reuse first policy for PPE and other single-use medical devices
- ☐ Action plan for tracking and monitoring PPE purchases, usage, management of end-of-life PPE products through circular economy practices, waste reduction, GHG reduction, cost savings and other co-benefits

Education/Training

Do you:

- ☐ Partner with Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC), Occupational Health and Safety (OHS), nursing leadership and others to develop education and training for health workforce to address excessive glove use
- ☐ Partner with IPAC, OHS, reusables vendor and others to develop education and training for health workforce to use and ensure protocols are followed for cleaning/sterilization of:
 - Reusable goggles and face shields
 - Reusable elastomeric respirators
 - Reusable isolation and surgical gowns, head and shoe covers
 - Reusable surgical masks (coming soon to Canada)
- ☐ Train health care workforce on how to properly collect and source-separate reusable and disposable items
- ☐ Train health care workforce on differences between the various levels of protection for each type of PPE, and their proper procedural (associated) uses

Infrastructure

Do you have the infrastructure needed to support circular economy approaches for PPE:

• Reusable PPE textiles (gowns, surgical masks, head and shoe covers)

- ☐ Storage space for clean/sterilized PPE
- ☐ Collection points and pick-up locations for used PPE, which are in containers clearly identified as 'dirty/soiled' or 'clean'
- ☐ Identified suitable health care laundry services for reusable PPE textiles
 - Onsite laundry services
 - Co-operative laundry services
 - Off-site commercial laundry services
- ☐ Arrangements with laundry services to track reuse frequency, agree on when reusable textiles will be considered unusable, undertake repair as needed, cull spent reusable textiles not meeting standards, seek repurpose opportunities (i.e., reusing spent surgical gowns as isolation gowns, reusing spent reusable surgical masks and gowns for training purpose, and using fabric from spent gowns to make head or shoe covers)

• Addressing excessive glove use

- ☐ Hand cleaning stations are optimally located and working properly
- ☐ Develop materials for health care workforce to reduce excessive glove use

• Reusable elastomeric respirators (RERs)

- ☐ Engaging Medical Device Reprocessing Department (MDRD) to clean/sterilize RERs
- ☐ Enabling health care workforce cleaning/sterilization with suitable cleaning/sterilization materials
- ☐ Storage of cleaned/sterilized RER when not in use
- ☐ Arrangements with MDRD to track reuse frequency, agree on when RER will be considered unusable, undertake repair as needed, cull spent RER not meeting standards, seek reuse opportunities (i.e., reusing RER for training purposes)

• Reusable goggles and face shields

- ☐ Engaging MDRD to clean/sterilize goggles and face shields
- ☐ Enabling health care workforce cleaning/sterilization with suitable cleaning/sterilization materials
- ☐ Storage of cleaned/sterilized goggles and face shields when not in use
- ☐ Arrangements with MDRD to track reuse frequency, agree when goggles and face shields will be considered unusable, undertake repair as needed, cull spent goggles and face shields not meeting standards, seek reuse opportunities (i.e., reusing materials for training purposes)



Infrastructure Cont'd

Do you have the infrastructure needed to support circular economy approaches for PPE:

- **Recycling opportunities for PPE**

- ☐ Identify recycling opportunities for wasted PPE, collection points and pick-up locations
- ☐ Consider adding gloves to recycling program and other recyclable PPE such as disposable surgical masks and single-use respirators (i.e., N95s)
- ☐ Seek recycling opportunities for wasted reusable PPE textiles, goggles and face shields
- ☐ Identify any return-to-vendor opportunities

Procurement

Have you set sustainability criteria into request-for-proposals which can include:

- ☐ GHG emission disclosure
- ☐ Sustainable textile/material fibers
- ☐ Made in Canada
- ☐ Free of toxic materials and chemicals
- ☐ Raw materials sourced in Canada
- ☐ Packaging has recycled content
- ☐ Reduced and sustainable product packaging
- ☐ Packaging has return-to-vendor
- ☐ Have sustainable policies and actions as part of vendor organizational strategy
- ☐ Fair wages for employees
- ☐ Distribution of PPE using zero-emission vehicles
- ☐ Reusable product has return-to-vendor options

Additional Guidance

To achieve these changes, the following groups must be around the table:

- ☐ Clinical and non-clinical health care workforce using PPE
- ☐ Green Team/Committee
- ☐ Infection Prevention and Control
- ☐ Senior leadership
- ☐ Clinical and non-clinical health care workforce responsible for cleaning/maintaining PPE
- ☐ Occupational Health and Safety
- ☐ Procurement department
- ☐ Board/Directors

How to get these groups engaged:

- **Make your case for a transition for reusables by:**

- ☐ Sharing literature that demonstrates the ability of reusables to meet performance standards for protective apparel
- ☐ Identifying potential concerns your organisation may have so you can address individuality
- ☐ Determining how disposables are affecting your facility and the environment
- ☐ Comparing the supply costs of disposables with the projected cost of the replacement reusables
- ☐ Collecting feedback from health care workforce on the comfort, serviceability and protective qualities of disposables when compared with reusables

- **Initiate a pilot**

- ☐ Receive approval from senior leadership to establish a team to develop a pilot project
- ☐ Obtain reusable products for the pilot by working with an approved vendor
- ☐ Select a department to pilot the program
- ☐ Track the cost savings with reusable products
- ☐ Track the amount of waste avoided when reusables are used
- ☐ Track user support for reusables
- ☐ Track other co-benefits (i.e., nurses report less skin irritation when using fewer gloves, reusable respirators are easier to breathe through)

For more information...

Visit our project webpage: <https://greenhealthcare.ca/ppe-msup/>

Contact us: coalition@greenhealthcare.ca

Read our report: "Towards a Safe, Secure, and Sustainable Reusable PPE System in Canada":