



IDAHO
DEPARTMENT OF
ENVIRONMENTAL
QUALITY

1410 North Hilton
Boise, ID 83706
208/373-0502

www.deq.idaho.gov

Creating a Healthcare Green Team

What is a green team?

A green team is a leadership team comprised of staff from a variety of departments or positions within a healthcare facility who have an interest in waste minimization and pollution prevention. Members of a green team work directly with the facility environmental coordinator (or a similar position) to coordinate and implement these efforts and give advice on how to make them more effective. Members can take decisions made by the green team or the environmental coordinator directly to their departments by educating fellow staff members and monitoring day-to-day operations within their departments. Team members can also serve as sounding boards for fellow staff members and communicate their ideas back to the environmental coordinator.

If your facility is not large enough to have an environmental coordinator, it is still possible to form a green team. All you need is one motivated individual willing to volunteer his or her time to coordinate environmental programs and recruit other volunteers to help with implementation.

Why is a green team important?

A green team is important to the success of any environmental program because it brings decision-makers and implementers together. While an environmental coordinator plays an important role in coordinating and managing a facility's environmental programs, it is unrealistic to assume that one person alone can both implement and monitor the programs. Your programs can achieve greater success by coordinating with staff members who actually deal with the various waste streams on a daily basis to implement pollution prevention efforts within their departments.

Who should join?

Anyone within the facility who has an interest in pollution prevention should be encouraged to join the green team. If the facility has an environmental coordinator or equivalent that person should also be encouraged to join to provide the team access to important resources. Additionally, the environmental coordinator will discover that the team is an important resource. Ideally, a green team should find a balance among staff from various departments and professions to assure the pollution prevention efforts are successful facility-wide.

Some suggested participants include staff representing:

- ◆ Environmental Services (including key waste handlers and supervisors)
- ◆ Safety
- ◆ Facilities
- ◆ Medical Services
- ◆ Infection Control
- ◆ Purchasing/Materials Management
- ◆ Radiology

- ◆ Laboratory
- ◆ Other staff from key clinical departments, or ad-hoc members as needed

If an interested party cannot commit to joining the green team, continue to keep that person informed about activities that will assist in reaching the team's overall goals.

What are a green team's responsibilities?

Green team responsibilities can include:

- ◆ Creating a waste management policy for the facility.
- ◆ Establishing environmental goals and objectives.
- ◆ Helping ensure that the facility is complying with waste management laws and regulations.
- ◆ Collecting baseline data on amounts of solid, medical, and hazardous waste generated monthly.
- ◆ Reducing the quantity of waste generated including solid, medical, and hazardous waste through medical waste segregation, environmentally preferable purchasing, etc.
- ◆ Diverting as much waste as possible from the landfill to recycling and/or reuse.
- ◆ Identifying cost saving opportunities that will also reduce waste.
- ◆ Identifying, inventorying, replacing, or labeling mercury-containing equipment or instruments.
- ◆ Reducing energy and water consumption.
- ◆ Implementing more sustainable practices and tools.
- ◆ Assisting with setting up waste management training sessions for staff members.
- ◆ Generating awareness among patients, visitors, and staff.
- ◆ Serving as a sounding board to other staff members to express their concerns or share their ideas.
- ◆ Marketing your facility as environmentally friendly.