








Clinical Recycling Trainer Program Guide



Photo: Susan Shyluk

The Clinical Waste and Recycling Trainer (CRT) program is an evaluation and education program Green+Leaders can implement to improve recycling in Lower Mainland hospital and residential care sites.

CONTENTS

-  Who is this program designed for? >>
-  Overview & Deliverables >>
-  Program Step-by-Step >>
-  What is a visual contamination audit? >>
-  Tools & Resources >>
-  Peer Education >>
-  Beyond Recycling >>

Who Is This Program Designed For?

This program is meant for B.C. health care staff interested in improving recycling habits at their site and reducing incidents of contamination of recycling bins with non-recyclables and hazardous waste. The program also provides tools for health care staff to engage with their colleagues in conversations about proper recycling and waste reduction behaviours.

If not already a member, interested health care staff should join the [Green+Leaders program](#) to become linked into a network of like-minded health care staff across the Lower Mainland working to green their workplaces (bcgreencare.ca/greenleaders).

To begin the program, email recycling@phsa.ca.

Green+Leaders Network



Trainer Objectives

- 📌 Train peers using recycling and waste reduction key messages
- 📌 Raise awareness about the importance of mindful recycling, waste disposal, and waste reduction in hospitals
- 📌 Inform Clinical Nurse Educators (when applicable) where they can get more information on proper recycling and waste disposal
- 📌 Provide a baseline of recycling contamination per unit
- 📌 Improve the function of recycling bins by replacing missing stickers and recommending additional bins where needed

Deliverables

A complete program project will include the following:

- 📌 A pre-project visual contamination audit
- 📌 Education logs for each education visit
- 📌 A post-project visual contamination audit
- 📌 A list of needed/requested recycling bin improvements
- 📌 Feedback from unit staff/Clinical Nurse Educators about the impact of the program

Program Timeline



Program Step-by-Step

Before Starting:

- 📄 Review all training documents provided in the appendices.
- 📄 Connect with the Recycling and Waste Reduction Consultant to complete final review.

Program Begins:

- 📄 Complete initial visual contamination audit on-site (see audit section for more details and PDF attachments for template).
- 📄 Note if any recycling bins have missing or incorrect stickers, or if the bins need additional maintenance. Contact your site's Support Services Manager to order new stickers or replace broken bins.
- 📄 Contact unit managers/department staff to set up education sessions.
- 📄 Complete education sessions with staff. These can vary from a 5 min refresher to a full 30 min training session (see Peer Education for more details).
- 📄 Visit as many units as you can to provide education; you may even do some repeat visits to educate staff that were not present during the first session.

Program Step-by-Step



Education Log

Clinical Waste and Recycling Trainer Program

Facility:	Date:	Time start:
Trainer:	# units visited:	Time end:

Unit specific activities and contamination found:

Unit:	Activities undertaken					Contamination		
	CNE/Lead contacted Y/N	Bins visual audit #	Training session C/H*	Materials left Y/N	Staff educated #	In MP	In MC	Other

*C: classroom training session; H: huddle training

- Keep logs of your education visits, including how many staff received education and what types of staff you engaged with (see PDF attachments for education log template).
- After education sessions are complete, perform a final visual contamination audit using the same template as the first one. This allows for comparison pre and post education sessions.

Finish the Program:

- Submit visual contamination audits and education logs to the Recycling and Waste Reduction Consultant.
- Keep in touch with the new contacts you have made! You are likely now seen as a recycling resource and staff may come to you with questions. Relationship-building is the best way to improve recycling behaviours and contribute to our waste reduction goals.

What is a Visual Contamination Audit?

Visual Audit Example

Site: SPH
Date: March 25, 2019
Auditor: Marianne Dawson

MP	Mixed Paper
MC	Mixed Containers
RC	Refundable Containers
S	Slim jim size
XLS	Double size slim jim size
D	Deskside size
T	Tall deskside size

Unit	Station	Bin	Size (S/D/T)	Appearance				Contamination Level					Contamination Type (Medical/Garbage/Misplaced)	Notes	
				Sticker fwd (y/n)	Lid Fwd (y/n/na)	Clean (y/n/na)	Clear liner (y/n)	0	Low (1)	Med (2-3)	High (>3)	Empty			Locked
			(Bin Size)	(Bin sticker forward)	(Lid sticker forward)	(Clean bin)	(Liner bag)								
10A	Nurse station	MP	S	Y	Y	Y	Y	x							
10A	Nurse station	MC	S	Y	Y	Y	Y			x				3 gloves, 1 tubing, 1 boxboard,	
10B	Nurse station	MP	S	Y	N	Y	Y	x							
10B	Nurse station	MC	S	N	Y	Y	Y		x					1 straw	
10C	Nurse station	MP	D	Y	Y	Y	Y	x							
10C	Nurse station	MC	S	Y	Y	Y	Y	x							
10D	Hallway (10224)	MP	S	Y	No sticker	Y	Y	x							
10D	Hallway (10224)	MC	S	Y	Y	Y	Y			x				1 styrofoam cup, 1 straw	
10D	Nurse station	MP	S	Y	N/A	Y	Y	x							
10D	Nurse station	MC	XLS	Y	N/A	Y	Y		x					1 soft plastic	
9A	Nurse station	MP	S	Y	N/A	Y	Y	x							

Before You Begin:

- 📄 Print off several copies of the Visual Contamination Audit template (see PDF attachments).

Start the Audit:

- 📄 Enter the unit you plan to audit. If it's not your home unit, let the staff know that you're from the Green Team and you're auditing the recycling bins. Ask if there are any recycling bins behind locked doors that they can help you access.
- 📄 At the recycling bin(s), fill out the location, recycling bin size, and recycling stream type. When noting down location, be sure to include a detailed enough description so you can differentiate the bins after completing the audit and when returning to do the post-project audit. This will make pre and post project comparisons a breeze!

What is a Visual Contamination Audit?

- 🗑️ Remove the lid (if necessary) and count how many individual pieces of non-recyclable materials you can see. Non-recyclables may be garbage, misplaced recyclables, or medical waste. Check the appropriate box in the template to reflect how many pieces of contamination you see.

Tip: Don't put your hand in the bin!

It's not necessary to count every piece of contamination in the bin. A visual audit is just that, a count of what is immediately visible. Sometimes (although rare), hazardous waste and/or sharps waste can end up in a recycling bin and in order to reduce chance of harm or injury, it is not advised to put an unprotected hand into the bin.

- 🗑️ In the Notes section, write down the composition of the contamination. See the example template for more guidance on how to capture this important information. The high level contamination categories are: misplaced recyclables (low concern), garbage (medium concern), and medical items (high concern). You can also be more detailed if you would like to target a specific contamination item that is reoccurring eg. soft plastic packaging in the mixed containers recycling bin.

Tip: Look in the garbage too!

The visual contamination audit is intended to review the recycling bins, but you may consider auditing garbage bins as well, in order to identify opportunities to divert more recycling. This will add more time needed for the audit, but often reveals helpful information and can support the need for additional recycling bins and increased education of staff.

What is a Visual Contamination Audit?

- 👉 Repeat steps 2-5 in each unit you visit until every unit has had one pre project audit.

Tip: Ideally your entire site is audited however if time and resources are limited, you can audit only those units you plan to provide education to.

Complete the Post Program Audit

- 👉 After all unit education sessions are complete, repeat the audit process so you have your post project data for comparison. Visual contamination audits are just one snapshot in time, however when put all together it can reveal how staff recycling behaviours change over time.

Tip: Use the recycling bin location details from your first audit as a template for your post-audit. This ensures you are checking the same bins both times!

Tools and Resources

There are many resources available to you to ensure you fully understand how recycling in health care works. Review and understand all the resources before the final review session with the Energy and Environmental Sustainability team consultant.



Recycling in a health care facility is different than at home or an office

Transform recycling at your site in 2 ½ minutes

[Watch Video Here >>](#)




Zero Waste Education and Resource Package For Health Care Staff

This document will introduce what is currently happening with health care recycling in

Zero Waste Education and Resource Guide

[Read Guide Here >>](#)



GreenCare Recyclopedia Mixed Containers

Recycling and Waste Segregation Guide

[See Recyclopedia Here>>](#)




GreenCare Waste Management Training For Healthcare Staff

Healthy people Healthy planet

Waste Management Training Presentation

[Review Training Here >>](#)



Recycling Sorting Game

Test Your Knowledge Here >>

Mixed Containers Mixed Paper Garbage

A waste reduction and recycling in-service can take many different forms, and it can depend a lot on the time given to the session. Generally an education session will take 10-30 min.

As a trainer, you have flexibility to individualize the training, although all education sessions should cover the following main points:

- 🗑️ The health authority has a goal to minimize the waste generated in health care and supporting operations, with a target to reach **50% waste diversion by 2030**.
- 🗑️ There are two main recycling streams: **Mixed Containers** and **Mixed Paper**
- 🗑️ Recycling in health care is often **different from recycling at home**, since health care deals with hazardous and biomedical waste that can cause contamination.
- 🗑️ Recycling is **sorted by hand** at the recycling facility, so we must be vigilant against hazardous waste contamination in recycling bins.
- 🗑️ Any item which has held or touched bodily fluids **cannot be recycled, even if it is made out of a recyclable plastic** (e.g. plastic urinal). This also means that even if that item did not ever hold a bodily fluid, it still cannot be recycled since once it's at the recycling facility we cannot guarantee it is clean.
- 🗑️ Our recycling partner has identified **7 products which are "red flag" items**, but are still commonly placed in the recycling bins: Gloves, specimen containers, urinals (incl graduated containers), IV bags, tubing, syringes (all types), plastic & glass vials
- 🗑️ **Soft plastic packaging is garbage** and cannot be put into the Mixed Containers bin

Peer Education

Building relationships is the most beneficial aspect of this program.

Housekeeping staff are often unseen allies and have insider knowledge of how the recycling is going in a unit.

Getting **buy-in from site leadership** is important. They will be a great support if you run into barriers convincing unit managers that this education is important.

Use this opportunity to **recruit more staff!**
The more staff connected to the Green+Leaders program, the more bottom-up change we will see.

Beyond Recycling

Proper recycling and waste disposal is important, but it doesn't end there. For units interested in moving beyond recycling, you can share the below resources:

[Waste Reduction Toolkit](#)

This toolkit helps identify opportunities for waste reduction at work.

[Waste Reduction Conversations](#)

Get in touch with the GreenCare team to set up an interactive, facilitated conversation with staff about reducing waste at work.

[Green Workplaces Opportunity Guide](#)

Understand where to start and where to focus when beginning to green the workplace.

Acknowledgements

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