Published on *University of Colorado* (https://www.cu.edu)

CU I&E Submission: Regulated Medical Waste Step-Can Program [1]

Submission Highlights

Team Information

Denise Donnelly, denise.donnelly@cuanschutz.edu [2]
Marisa Scott, Biosafety Specialist

What

The Department of Environmental Health & Safety, Biosafety Division (EHS) manages the Regulated Medical Waste (RMW) that's generated from research, clinical, and laboratory classroom daily activities on the Denver|Anschutz Medical campuses. There is more than 89 tons of RMW generated annually. Regular trash cans and large 28-gallon RMW tubs have been used for point-of-use collection for this waste as it is generated. EHS saw the need to have a specific designated type of receptacle that is only used for RMW and to prohibit trash from being placed in these receptacles. EHS selected a step can that's commercial grade and can withstand repeated use over many years. These step cans are available in several sizes (8, 13, & 18 gallon), have a small footprint (space saving), and are convenient to use (foot pedal & stay-open lid capability).
Face-to face training has been an integral part for the success of this program. It's important for research and clinical staff to be able to properly segregate RMW from all of types of items generated which includes regular trash.

Why

It's very important to establish a culture of safety and compliance around the generation of RMW. Before this program was initiated, there was no specific container designated for RMW. Labs and clinics were using regular trash cans with biohazard liners as a point of generation receptacle. This can be very confusing and a behavioral issue to associate a trash can with RMW, thus lending itself to placing "trash" in this as well. These RMW step cans help to reinforce the correct behavior of not placing "trash" in them, therefore, helping to reduce the RMW cost to the University.

When

In June of 2017, EHS began distributing these step cans to labs who had participated in the "Let's Talk Trash" training. There are now 459 step cans that have been placed in research, clinical and teaching labs throughout the Denver and Anschutz Medical campuses. Trainings

are conducted on a voluntary basis and at the request of the research and clinical staff. EHS provides these step cans to an average of 3 to 5 labs monthly. Lab personnel select the step can sizes that works best for their workspace and can customize each step can with the use of fun labels.

Source URL:https://www.cu.edu/controller/i-e-awards/current-submissions/cu-ie-submission-cu-denveranschutz-medical-campus

Links
[1] https://www.cu.edu/controller/i-e-awards/current-submissions/cu-ie-submission-cu-denveranschutz-medical-campus [2] mailto:denise.donnelly@cuanschutz.edu