

CASE STUDY

SECURE PLASTICS DISPOSITION

HEALTHCARE AND LIFE SCIENCES ORGANIZATIONS ARE ADOPTING ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL AND GOVERNANCE (ESG) INITIATIVES FOR SEVERAL REASONS: TO BEST SERVE THE COMMUNITIES IN WHICH THEY OPERATE, TO DIFFERENTIATE THEMSELVES AS EXPECTATIONS INCREASE FOR RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS PRACTICES, FOR TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY AND ALSO TO MEET EVOLVING REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS.

Organizations across the globe are thinking strategically and creating ESG (Environmental, Social, Governance) programs with actionable plans with measurable results that are in alignment with evolving regulatory requirements. ESG has advanced from functional initiatives to enterprise-wide programs that are embedding sustainable practices across the organization. Those practices are increasing operational efficiency, reducing costs, mitigating risks and helping to gain the trust of consumers, communities, employees and investors.

FROM LINEAR TO CIRCULAR

Waste is a common problem for health care organizations. It is expensive to manage and often comes with complicated challenges like data privacy and hazardous waste. Like other industries, many health care organizations are looking for innovative ways to transition from a linear, "take-make-waste" model to a circular economy.

SECURE PLASTICS DISPOSITION AS A DIFFERENTIATOR

As the circular economy gains momentum, in certain industries protecting data is a primary concern before considerations of recycling or reusability – whether it is proprietary or intellectual property data, internal or external information, data stored in multiple sources, or even in its products. In healthcare especially, protecting patient privacy or data is paramount to ensure HIPAA compliance regarding protected health information (PHI). That's where Iron Mountain's Secure Plastics Disposition solution can help. Our solution has secure end-to-end chain of custody. This allows customers to meet compliance requirements, manage data privacy risks and help meet their waste goals.



HOW A LARGE US PHARMACY RETAILER TOOK ADVANTAGE OF IRON MOUNTAIN'S CIRCULAR PLASTICS PILL BOTTLE SOLUTION

CHALLENGE

A US pharmacy retailer wanted a solution to eliminate landfilling of an increasing number of plastic pill bottles but particularly managing and addressing risks associated with protected health information (PHI). With privacy concerns and to ensure compliance, the organization needed an enterprise-wide destruction program that could be easily implemented. Additionally, the organization wanted to find ways to reduce their overall environmental impact and accelerate meeting their ESG commitments.

SOLUTION

The company turned to Iron Mountain and its secure plastics disposition solution that offered destruction of their amber vial pill bottles, as well as their pharmaceutical stock bottles, in a secure, strategic and scalable manner. Working with the team that included the director of global accounts, the circular economy SME, procurement and operations, Iron Mountain launched a bottle collection and disposition program.

Pharmaceutical stock and pill bottles were collected in secure bins at over 3000 locations. Iron Mountain collected these bottles, shredded the plastic and then sent it to a molecular recycler with a verifiable chain of custody. Using a process called pyrolysis, the recycler converted the shredded plastic to pyrolysis oil which has a number of uses, included in plastics manufacturing as a high-quality, cost competitive replacement for petrochemical raw material.

This "circular" approach significantly reduced the environmental impacts by keeping the material at its highest value through the efficient use of the collected plastic material. This approach avoided both incineration and landfilling of single use plastics, creating a new value chain with environmental and economic advantages at every stage - and an end result of displacing virgin petrochemicals.

Iron Mountain's solution offered the retailer two key benefits: confidence that their patients' data and PHI on pill bottles remained secure, and a more sustainable model to eliminate non-confidential waste such as stock bottles.

IMMEDIATE BENEFITS

- Secure shredding of about 7 million pounds (3,500 tons) of pill bottles, diverting them from a landfill
- Removal of single-use plastic and conversion into virgin pyrolysis oil through molecular recycling
- Improved communication and relationships across their value chain to help them meet their sustainability goals
- Help company move closer to a closed loop circular model and meet corporate responsibility commitments

LONG-TERM BENEFITS

Working with the Chief Sustainability Officer at the organization, Iron Mountain is helping them achieve their recycling compliance, zero waste and circular economy goals. A circular solution for single use plastics has the potential to yield additional economic incentives within the supply chain as manufacturing costs shift to more sustainable and less expensive raw materials.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR SECURE PLASTICS DISPOSITION SOLUTIONS, VISIT [IRONMOUNTAIN.COM/SUSTAINABILITY](https://ironmountain.com/sustainability)