

St. Elizabeth Hospital, Covington, KY, goes EtO-free

The material processing center at St. Elizabeth Hospital, Covington, Ky., switched to a low-temperature hydrogen peroxide gas plasma system to improve air quality and reduce hazards from exposure to ethylene oxide (EtO) in its material processing area. The hospital also reduced daily sterilization loads from six per day (EtO) to partial loads once or twice a week.

Cost, safety and environmental concerns are prompting many facilities to consider EtO and glutaraldehyde alternatives for sterilization and high-level disinfection. EtO is a known human carcinogen and requires special handling, air monitoring and safety practices. Glutaraldehyde is a sensitizer, can induce asthma, cause skin dermatitis and irritate mucous membranes.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has developed guidelines to help facilities classify reusable instruments and determine whether they need to be high level disinfected or sterilized.

Note: This article originally appeared in the January 2006 issue of the *GreenLink* newsletter. Check back soon for additional details on this success story.

Return to:

[GreenLink newsletter](#)

[Green Corner home page for more success stories](#)