

DISPOSABLE \neq
RECYCLABLE

OR Sustainability Expert

FIRST
CASE



KAREN GOELST
CEO & FOUNDER OF KLEENEDGE

First Case OR Sustainability Expert™:

STATING THAT A DISPOSABLE CURTAIN IS RECYCLABLE IS NOT THE SAME AS RECYCLING CURTAINS

Karen Goelst | CEO & Founder of KleenEdge

Many hospitals operated at or near capacity during the pandemic in 2020-2021. If there was a privacy curtain at the COVID-infected patient's bedside, it had to be exchanged for a clean one after the room was terminally cleaned and before the next admission.

During this period of unprecedented curtain exchanges, many hospitals realized that launderable curtains were a BIG problem for the Environmental Services department. Changing a curtain involved "a man, a ladder and a trip to the curtain lockup and about 60 minutes", significantly impacting room turnover and bed availability.

Many chose to switch from cloth to polypropylene privacy curtains that could be exchanged in minutes and were RECYCLABLE! Facilities that did so declared, "Hooray! We can save the planet while reducing labor and getting rid of our ugly, wrinkled curtains!"

But joy turned to grief because virtually NO Hospital recycled these curtains. This as companies that recycle single use disposables want nothing to do with curtains that MIGHT be contaminated with COVID or something worse.

Facilities may explore whether current technologies such as TCG's SteriMelt and CurtainMelt can be deployed to help recycle polypropylene items such as disposable curtains, cover gowns, masks, and CSR drapes (clean and contaminated). Deploying this type of technology may be the missing link to ensuring that your disposable curtain is getting recycled versus going into the landfill.

Have more questions for this expert? Contact Karen at kgoelst@KleenEdge.com

OR Sustainability Expert Series™ Biography:

Karen Goelst

Founder & CEO



With a 20-year background in architectural specialties and textiles, Karen Goelst became passionate about solving the issues surrounding privacy curtains following her 15-year-old son's hospital stay with MRSA.

Staying at his bedside she noticed everybody touched the fabric privacy curtain, but the label showed that it hadn't been exchanged for 14 months. Thankfully her son recovered, but this realization started her journey in trying to understand why curtains weren't getting exchanged, when other touchpoints in the room were thoroughly disinfected. Karen founded KleenEdge to ensure this infection risk did not impact other families.

KleenEdge builds its privacy curtain solutions on 4 pillars:

- Protocol software that monitors curtain exchange compliance
- Sustainable cost-saving recyclable curtains
- No-ladder solutions to promote lean workflows and safety
- Patient and staff safety

Launched in 2018, the company received early accolades for its innovative Protocol Compliance Software, receiving AHE's Product Innovation Award, as well as getting patents for the QuickLoad and TeleTrack "no ladder" curtain exchange cubicle track solutions. KleenEdge's solutions have helped many healthcare facilities dramatically reduce operational costs, while having peace of mind knowing that their curtain exchanges are compliant and deliver the highest standard of care for their patient's safety.



**FIRST
CASE**
THE OPERATING ROOM PODCAST

