

# Recall Management

Preparing your company for the unexpected



**S**ometimes a situation arises that even the sharpest counsel can't anticipate. It starts with a flurry of consumer complaints. Followed by hurried meetings and emergency phone calls. Finally, the realization that your company needs to recall an unsafe product.

Now, senior management is turning to you for guidance.

## Will your company survive a crisis?

Most companies would prefer to avoid them entirely, but recalls are a very real risk that are

becoming more common. For companies large and small, recalls have more than doubled over the past ten years, due to a combination of greater regulatory requirements, global supply chain intricacies and improved testing techniques. For most producers, a significant recall is becoming a matter of "when," not "if."

Because of their unpredictability, recalls are some of the most challenging obstacles

your company will face. They test every area of your company—overwhelming call centres with concerned consumers, bloating distribution centres with returned products, and pressuring key team members to manage it all while juggling regular business operations.

Too often, companies caught off guard by adverse events are forced to hastily take corrective action, opening the door for greater haz-

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ards than a lacklustre bottom line—including potential liabilities associated with public health, regulatory compliance reporting and disposing of waste safely and securely.

Whatever the reason for a recall, the fact remains: even after years of a clean safety record, it only takes one poorly managed recall to damage your company's brand.

## A unique advantage to protect your company

But that doesn't mean you can't prepare for the unexpected. As part of an in-house legal team, you have a unique advantage over outside counsel: while an outside legal team is more likely to hear about a developing issue or a recall situation only after it has reached a certain level of severity, you're in a position to prepare in advance, react quickly and guide the business away from extreme risk.

The in-house advantage is having the foresight to spot problems sooner—sometimes even before there are any warning signs. With the right preparedness plan, you won't just

survive a recall; you'll master it.

## But how prepared are you?

Though it's impossible to entirely negate the risk of a recall, companies that practice strict compliance with regulatory guidance can best reduce the chance of experiencing a crisis. As with any other emergency situation, preparedness is key to protecting consumers *and* your company. You will need to address the following areas:

**Recall Team**—Assemble and educate an internal team before a recall, so key members can jump into action.

**Mock Recalls**—Exercises should be performed regularly with critical team members and executive management.

**Notification & Response Management**—Notify the necessary regulatory bodies to begin the risk assessment process.

**Communications & Media Management**—From dedicated webpages to social media and news releases, communications need to be sensitive, informative and timely.

**Recovering Materials**—Navigate the logistics of product retrieval and storage management.

**Product Management & Material Destruction**—Environmentally safe disposal reduces liability.

**Rebuilding Inventories**—Contingency planning will keep the supply chain moving smoothly.

**Regaining Trust**—Remedy management and compensation is part of a robust recall plan.

**Compliance Reporting**—Ensure all regulatory requirements are followed.

**Product Recall Insurance**—Protect yourself against losses incurred during a recall.

Companies that take every step to defend themselves from potentially hazardous situations are those best poised to mitigate product risks, protect the public and safeguard their bottom line. By planning ahead and building a recall strategy and risk prevention plan for the future, you can problem solve before problems strike.

## Finally, seek the help of an expert

You don't have to go it alone. In a recall situation, a third-party expert can help you expect the unexpected.

Consider the fact that, if your company is well run, you may encounter recalls very rarely. The paradox to this is that the fewer recalls you have, the less experience your team will gain in dealing with a crisis. A secret weapon against any recall is to draw upon the expertise of an experienced partner, someone who has dealt with recalls of all shapes and sizes for decades.

Stericycle ExpertSOLUTIONS is that partner: an on-call extension of your team, with staff standing ready to guide you through pre-recall preparedness to response management and material destruction—all to ensure that, no matter what arises, it will have minimal impact on your customers, your operations and your brand.

**Discover the ways that Stericycle ExpertSOLUTIONS can help you navigate a recall emergency at [stericycle.ca/ExpertRecall](http://stericycle.ca/ExpertRecall)**