



## Smart Wear

**A Canadian company supports the green movement one garment at a time.**

SINCE 1920, Ontario-based Lac-Mac Limited has been a manufacturer focused on the industry of green products for the health care market. As a leader in the design and dissemination of reusable surgical drapes and gowns, Lac-Mac makes evident the many advantages of using its barrier fabrics.

Originally a uniform manufacturer, they began by providing custom-tailored nursing garments including capes and caps. From there, they developed and introduced a line of reusable surgical textiles in the early 1950s. That line has continued to evolve, while the uniform segment of the business has been phased out. Today, their focus is high-performance reusable protective products for the operating room.

“We didn’t aspire to develop environmentally preferred products, it is just what we have always done,” says director of marketing Shelley Petrovskis. “However, it is by choice that we remain committed to...what we produce and the way in which we conduct ourselves corporately.”

Toward that end Lac-Mac manufactures gowns and patient drapes made with its proprietary R.MOR.Tex® surgical barrier. Such fabric can be reprocessed and reused up to 125 times. Specialists produce custom-designed products for applications requiring protection from chemicals, microscopic blood-borne pathogens, and bodily fluids commonly found in operating rooms. Surgical teams, patients, and the environment all benefit from Lac-Mac solutions. The company also makes FR/ARC-rated protective rainwear and specialty jackets for law enforcement and security officials.

The lifespan of a reusable gown far exceeds its disposable counterpart, which is discarded after a single use. Disposable gowns account for an enormous portion of the medical waste that ends up in landfills; recycled textiles, on the other hand, replace the equivalent of 300 disposable gowns. To appreciate the gravity of the problem posed by disposable items, consider the length of time it takes for polyethylene, a component of single-use barrier products, to decompose can be as long as 400 years—some sources go so far as to claim a lifespan of up to 1,000 years.

In addition to environmental favorability, Lac-Mac textiles offer significant monetary savings when compared to single-use fabrics; studies have shown that single-use programs cost nearly double that of a reusable application.


In Canada, reusables dominate the marketplace. Lac-Mac serves as a commercial processor, or launderer, and supplies approximately 90 percent of the country’s commercial health care laundries. Because disposables are more widely used in the United States, Lac-Mac’s market share is much lower south of the border. There is, therefore, a significant opportunity in the States—one that Lac-Mac plans to take advantage of. In fact, they started promoting their products to the American market in 2011 by leveraging their expertise as co-developer of GORE® surgical barrier fabric.

“We have had great success to date,” says Petrovskis, “but recognize we have a long way to go to achieve [the kind of] implementation rates in the United States that we have accomplished in Canada.”

In an effort to get those numbers up, Petrovskis says, “Our plan is to continue to educate end-users and to work with laundry providers...to promote the merits of reusable surgical gowns and drapes.”

Education certainly plays a role in Lac-Mac’s work. In collaboration with other laundry partners, they provide in-service trainings to end-users at the hospital level. As a member of both Practice Greenhealth and the American Reusable Textile Association, as well as a supporter of the International Association for Healthcare Textile Management—Lac-Mac communicates the important message of how reusables benefit hospital clients.

Industry trends suggest that Lac-Mac products are soon to be even more widely used. “More and more health care facilities are looking to reusables as a way to reduce medical waste and to help them achieve their environmental initiatives and save money,” notes Petrovskis. “Green teams and sustainability leaders are driving the trend towards products such as ours.”

Lac-Mac also embarks on initiatives that include recycling paper, cardboard, plastic, batteries, and electronics throughout the company, as well as eliminating nonessential packing. 

### NEW BUSINESS MEMBERS

**Arrow Value Recovery** Quincy, MA  
**e3 Solutions** Granville, MI  
**EPeward, Inc.** Boynton Beach, FL  
**GOJO** Akron, OH  
**H-Source** Spokane, WA  
**Medtronic** Minneapolis, MN  
**Red Bag Solutions, Inc.** Baltimore, MD

### RENEWING BUSINESS MEMBERS

**3M** St. Paul, MN  
**Anesthetic Gas Reclamation, LLC**  
 Nashville, TN  
**B Braun** Bethlehem, PA  
**Baxter Healthcare Corporation**  
 Deerfield, IL  
**Beacon Converters** Saddle Brook, NJ  
**Belimed** Charleston, SC  
**Boulder Associates Architects**  
 Boulder, CO  
**Capaccio Environmental Engineering, Inc.**  
 Marlborough, MA  
**Cimetrics** Boston, MA  
**EXP Pharmaceutical Services Corp.**  
 Fremont, CA  
**Implant Recycling LLC** Detroit, MI  
**Mazzetti** San Francisco, CA  
**Naturepedic** Chagrin Falls, OH  
**Philips** Somerset, NJ  
**STERIS Corporation** Mentor, OH