



REDUCING LINEN LOSS ACROSS HEALTHCARE SETTINGS

*Building a Culture of Efficiency, Accountability and
Sustainable Linen Management*



A Crown Health Care Laundry Services White Paper
December 2025

Executive Summary

Reducing Preventable Linen Loss Without Disrupting Patient Care

Linen loss is one of the most underestimated and preventable drains on hospital performance. According to the Textile Rental Services Association, nearly 90% of hospital linens never reach their full useful life, costing U.S. healthcare facilities more than \$840 million every year.

For a typical 300-bed hospital, preventable linen loss represents an estimated \$350,000–\$500,000 in annual avoidable expense — hidden in waste streams, patient transfers, over-ordering, and everyday unit-level habits. With margins tightening and reimbursement pressures rising, this represents one of the fastest, lowest-disruption financial improvement opportunities available to healthcare leaders.

With Medicare and Medicaid reimbursement cuts looming, every controllable expense matters. Reducing linen loss offers an immediate and measurable opportunity to strengthen financial performance, improve infection control, and support sustainability, all without disrupting patient care.

These recurring losses stem from a predictable set of behavior-based issues seen across inpatient and outpatient facilities:

Six Key Causes of Linen Loss

- 1. Incorrect Disposal:** Clean or soiled linen mistakenly thrown away with trash or biohazardous waste.
- 2. Patient Transfers:** Linens sent with transferred patients that are never returned.
- 3. Scrubs Leaving the Facility:** Staff members taking scrubs off-site.

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Reducing linen loss doesn't require massive change—just consistent, visible action.

- 4. Theft:** Intentional removal of hospital linen for personal use by patients or staff.
- 5. Hoarding:** Departments stockpiling excess linen, leading to misplaced or uncounted inventory.
- 6. Misuse:** Using patient care linen for cleaning tasks, spill response, or alternative patient needs.

While these causes are common, they are also entirely preventable with the right structure in place: clear processes, consistent education, and ongoing reinforcement.

Small behavioral changes. Big financial impact.

THE OPPORTUNITY FOR A 300-BED HOSPITAL

Preventable Linen Loss

\$350K–\$500K / year (TRSA benchmark)

Achievable Recovery

\$175K–\$400K / year

Total Financial Upside

\$325K–\$700K / year in loss reduction, waste avoidance, par level compression, labor efficiency gains

Clinical Equivalent

Funds 3–6 bedside nurses

When hospitals partner with Crown and *systematically address the six primary causes of linen loss, they have achieved 50–80% reductions, without capital investment or workflow disruption.* These results are driven by data-backed audits, visual education tools,

better ordering discipline, and improved waste stream practices, all designed to change behavior, not just policy.

Crown helps facilities uncover the root causes of loss through Linen Summits, detailed on-site assessments that identify usage patterns, inventory issues, and waste trends. From there, the Crown team delivers tailored action plans and hands-on education through initiatives like QuickCare Linen Lessons™. These services are provided to customers at no additional cost, empowering them to make measurable improvements.

Beyond financial impact, reducing linen loss strengthens infection control by improving proper segregation and preventing overfilled bag risks. Correct handling also reduces regulated medical waste volumes, supporting hospital sustainability goals and lowering one of the facility's most expensive waste streams. More consistent par levels and reliable linen availability reduce staff frustration, save time, and streamline workflows across nursing and EVS teams.

Linen loss may seem like an unavoidable part of patient care, but its impact is far-reaching. Every misplaced towel, gown, or sheet represents money that could have been reinvested in staff, patients, and facility improvements. While leadership support is vital, success ultimately depends on consistent engagement, reliable data, and the everyday habits of staff.

Reclaiming just \$150,000–\$250,000 annually is equivalent to funding one to two bedside nurses, making linen optimization an immediate, high-impact margin strategy.

Through structured reinforcement and leadership engagement, Crown helps organizations transform improved habits into long-term cultural change.



Key Takeaways

Leadership sets the tone.

When executives and managers make linen management a visible priority, staff accountability and engagement follow.

Data creates accountability.

Tools like LinenHelper, along with audits and par monitoring, reveal usage trends and waste patterns.

Education drives change.

Ongoing learning through online modules, posters, and on-the-floor sessions such as Crown's QuickCare Linen Lessons™, ensures consistent practice and lasting behavior change.

Financial results can be significant.

Significant financial gains are possible, with facilities reporting cost reductions in the tens of thousands—including savings from reduced waste stream and red-bag disposal costs. *These savings could support the annual cost of bedside nurses, new equipment or other initiatives.*

Supports infection prevention efforts.

Better segregation, proper bagging, and reduced overfilled bags lower exposure risk, reduce cross-contamination pathways, and support Joint Commission and CMS compliance.

Reinforcement builds habits.

New habits take time. Sustained reinforcement through rounding, communication, and recognition keeps change in place.

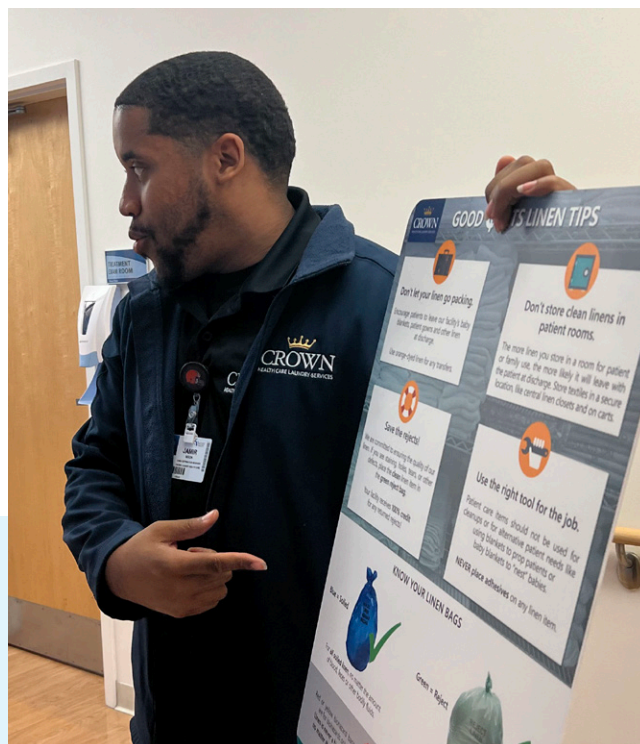
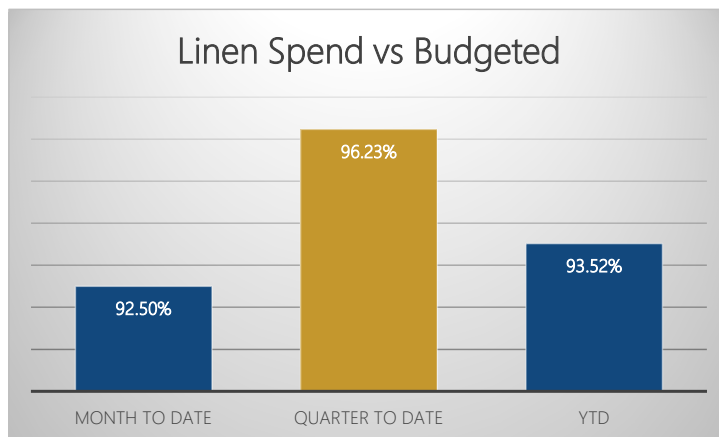
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Simple visibility changes—signage, floor rounding, linen and trash bag audits—create awareness that lasts

Inpatient Impact in Action

In early 2024, a major hospital in the Southeast with over 1,000 beds partnered with Crown Health Care Laundry Services to address a growing set of operational and clinical challenges — excessive linen waste, mounting linen loss charges, and inconsistent linen-handling practices that posed risks to infection control. These issues were costing the hospital hundreds of thousands of dollars annually, while also increasing the likelihood of cross-contamination, improper segregation, and overfilled soiled-linen bags that created safety concerns for staff.

Together, Crown and the hospital launched a structured, data-driven improvement program designed around awareness, accountability, and continuous reinforcement. The initiative combined real-time audit data, targeted education, standardized linen-handling processes, and high-visibility reminders to change daily habits across nursing, EVS, and support teams. As a result, the hospital achieved measurable improvements in linen utilization, waste reduction, and infection control compliance—demonstrating that operational discipline and clinical safety are closely linked.



A Crown Internal Linen Distribution Manager delivers an onsite QuickCare Linen Lesson™.



The results confirmed the program's effectiveness, with impressive reductions and improved efficiency. Quarterly linen loss dropped from nearly **\$82,000 to just \$13,000** within four months, a **reduction of more than 80%**. Leadership's sustained involvement ensured the changes became part of daily operations rather than a short-term project.

Initiative Highlights



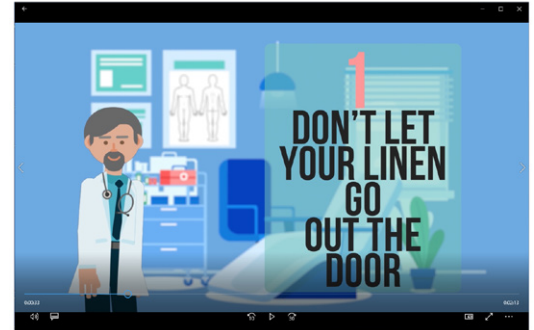
Standardized Education Across Departments

Collaborating closely with hospital staff educators, Crown developed comprehensive Online Learning Modules to unify linen education.



Engaging Orientation Tools

A customized orientation video produced by Crown was added to new-hire onboarding, reinforcing proper linen handling from day one.



Consistent Oversight and Compliance

Weekly linen room and cart audits were implemented to verify correct labeling, organization, and the separation of reject versus soiled items. Improved sorting and labeling also reduce regulated medical waste and support sustainability goals.



On-the-Floor Microtraining

Beginning in May 2024, Crown introduced QuickCare Linen Lessons™, brief, high-impact training sessions held during daily staff huddles to refresh knowledge and promote real-time accountability.



Targeted Waste Tracking

A 12-Week Trash Audit program identified key waste sources, monitored improvements, and helped quantify the financial impact of behavioral changes.



Data-Driven Reeducation

Crown's internal distribution team reviewed audit data regularly, providing focused feedback and reeducation wherever recurring issues were identified.



Leadership-Integrated Support

The initiative was reinforced by hospital leadership through their Emerging Leadership Program. Participants, identified as future leaders, completed a capstone project focused on reducing linen loss, further embedding sustainable change within the organization's culture.

Linen Optimization at the System Level

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Simple visibility changes like signage, floor rounding, bag and trash audits create awareness that lasts.

An Atlantic Coast health system proved that system-wide alignment delivers system-wide results. When leadership brought multiple hospitals under shared standards—supported by consistent education, real-time data, and clear accountability—the organization saw meaningful gains in both financial performance and clinical safety. By reducing linen loss, waste stream errors, and variation in handling practices, the health system achieved major improvements across three facilities in just one quarter, demonstrating how quickly coordinated action can produce measurable, enterprise-level impact.

FACILITY A

74% Reduction in Linen Loss

Profile

Small 20-bed hospital with high EMS activity.

Challenges

High EVS turnover, excessive ordering, and frequent linen loss during EMS transfers.

Key Actions Implemented

- Conducted weekly soil room and floor audits.
- Implemented LinenHelper with staff training.
- Increased communication with EMS partners to ensure orange-dyed transfer linens were returned.
- Shifted to a needs-based ordering system, eliminating unnecessary Friday orders unless verified by inventory levels.

Quarterly Results

Reduced loss from \$27,000 → \$7,000, an approximate **\$20,000 annualized savings**

FACILITY B

53% Reduction in Linen Loss

Profile

Approximately 400-bed acute care hospital.

Challenges

Chronic overstocking of units, leading to inflated inventory counts and hidden losses.

Key Actions Implemented

- Optimized LinenHelper usage for real-time tracking.
- Posted par level sheets on all linen carts to eliminate guesswork.
- Conducted hands-on staff training on proper stocking and rotation.

Quarterly Results

Reduced loss from \$60,000 → \$28,000, an approximate **\$30,000 to \$40,000 annualized savings**

FACILITY C

98% Reduction in
Linen Loss

Profile

Long-term nursing facility.

Challenges

High EVS turnover, excessive ordering, and frequent linen loss during EMS transfers.

Key Actions Implemented

- Strengthened par level controls.
- Delivered on-floor education on bagging and linen return.
- Introduced routine cart checks to verify adherence.
- Reducing overstock lowers energy, water, and waste across the system.

Quarterly Results

Reduced loss from \$12,000 → \$200, a *near-complete elimination* of linen loss.

A Crown Customer Advocate performing routine cart checks to maintain par level accuracy and prevent hidden loss.



Targeted training, smarter use of technology, and consistent communication, provided by Crown at no cost, resulted in a combined quarterly linen loss reduction of more than \$63,000 across three of the system's highest-loss facilities in one quarter.

Recovering Linen Spend in Rehabilitation Settings

At a rehabilitation hospital, staff noticed steadily rising linen costs despite stable patient volumes—a clear signal that preventable loss and process variation were driving unnecessary expense. The hospital was also experiencing inconsistent linen availability, overstocked storage areas, and handling practices that increased waste stream costs and created infection control risks.

To address these issues, the Crown Customer Advocate and facility leadership partnered on a year-long improvement initiative built on transparency, routine audits, and consistent reinforcement. Quarterly usage reviews, Clean Soil Variance analysis, and par-level adjustments provided the data needed

to correct chronic over-ordering and eliminate hidden loss points. Targeted staff education improved proper bagging, segregation, and return practices, strengthening infection prevention compliance.

By right-sizing par levels and aligning them with actual demand, the facility ensured reliable linen availability while reducing excess inventory, lowering waste volume, and improving workflow efficiency for nursing and EVS teams. The hospital ultimately became the only facility in its system to stay within its linen budget—demonstrating how disciplined linen management can improve financial performance, operational reliability, and patient care.

Actions Taken

- Conducted quarterly utilization reviews using Clean Soil Variance data.
- Removed excess linen stock from storage areas
- Routinely evaluated and updated par levels to match seasonal demand.
- Retrained nursing and EVS teams on bagging and return procedures.
- Shared quarterly feedback reports with department managers to encourage competition and accountability.



Within 12 months, this location became the only facility in its system to remain within its linen budget, *achieving an average Clean Soil Variance of 23%.*

This data-driven partnership demonstrated that long-term success comes from ongoing collaboration, not one-time correction.

Outpatient Efficiency Boosts

While inpatient and long-term care facilities often struggle with linen waste due to larger product mixes and higher volumes, outpatient clinics face a different kind of challenge. With smaller teams, limited storage space, and frequent staff turnover, linen loss in clinics is rarely about misuse; it's about ordering and inventory habits. Staff may over-order "just in case," store excess linen in closets, or allow unused items to sit for months, creating artificial shortages and inflated costs.

Crown's Regional Clinic Manager model was designed to address these issues directly, bringing structure, visibility, and accountability to even the smallest healthcare locations. By pairing data analysis with regular on-site visits, the regional clinic manager reviews actual linen usage, verifies par levels, and provides hands-on guidance to help clinics align their ordering and return practices with real demand.

This field-based approach connects data with day-to-day behavior through route rides, invoice reviews, inventory observation, and staff engagement. Each visit ensures linen quantities match need, invoices reflect usage, and products are rotated and stored properly. The result is fewer emergency orders, tighter inventory control, and less waste across the system.

In 2025, Crown's Regional Clinic Manager in the Lakeland market recovered more than **22,000 pieces of overstocked linen, resulting in over \$60,000 in cost avoidance** during the first three quarters of the year. Participating clinics reported improved budget discipline, smoother operations, and better linen quality through consistent product rotation.



Right-sizing par levels with real procedure data helps clinics cut excess linen, save space, lower linen loss charges, and avoid unnecessary processing costs.



By combining real-time data, field verification, and education, Crown helps clinics operate with the same level of efficiency and sustainability as large hospital systems, proving that effective linen management is achievable at every level of care.

The Impact of Continuous Education and Reinforcement

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Linen loss isn't just a housekeeping issue; it's an accountability issue.

Training should never end after orientation. Even the most well-intentioned practices fade without consistent reinforcement. Habits are strengthened through repetition, visibility, and engagement, which is why ongoing education is critical to sustaining long-term results. Routine reinforcement also improves infection control reliability and reduces waste stream errors.

Successful facilities treat linen management education as an ongoing part of operations, not a one-time initiative. Regular reminders, visible leadership support, and friendly accountability keep the topic relevant and front of mind for every employee, from nursing staff to environmental services.

Effective Reinforcement Strategies



Visual Reminders

Posters and signage in breakrooms, nursing stations, linen rooms, linen carts, and soiled linen areas serve as daily cues for proper handling and bagging.



Crown's QuickCare Linen Lessons™

Short, focused sessions delivered during shift huddles or rounds bring education directly to staff where they work, without interrupting patient care.



Meeting Integration

Linen management should be a recurring agenda item in department meetings, safety briefings, and rounding reports—keeping awareness consistent across teams.



Recognition and Motivation

Friendly competitions for “most improved” departments or those with the lowest loss rates spark engagement and pride in results.



Data Transparency

Sharing quarterly loss and recovery results helps staff see tangible progress, connecting daily habits to measurable outcomes.





When linen management becomes embedded in daily routines—reinforced visually, verbally, and practically—it evolves from a compliance requirement into a lasting culture of accountability and pride.

Crown offers tailored visual reminders, including posters and stickers, designed to support each customer's specific needs at no additional cost.

REJECT LINEN

Sábanas Y Fundas Rechazadas

Place CLEAN linen here that is:

-  Torn or has a hole
-  Missing snaps or ties
-  Excessively worn or wrinkled
-  Heavily stained

EMS Partners



Leave one, take one!

When bringing a patient to the ER, please place all reusable soiled linen in a blue soiled linen bag.

On your way out, pick up a set of **orange dyed linen** for your next patient.




Please don't overfill soiled linen bags!



One set of patient room linens is the perfect amount for one bag.



Overfilled bags are a safety hazard for laundry staff due to the excess weight and contamination from split bags.



Don't forget to tie securely, with an overhand knot or gooseneck tie.



Please no "rabbit ear" knots!



PLEASE
NEVER
Throw Away
Soiled
Linen

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Facilities that treat linen education as ongoing, not occasional, see stronger habits, lower losses, and lasting results.

Identifying Opportunities: The Crown Linen Summit

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Crown's Linen Summits turn guesswork into data, and data into savings.

The first step in solving linen loss is understanding where it occurs, and that insight is rarely obvious without a structured review. Crown's Linen Summits provide a data-driven, on-site assessment that helps healthcare partners identify their greatest opportunities for improvement and cost savings.

During a Linen Summit, Crown specialists visit the facility to observe real-world practices, engage with staff, and analyze every stage of the linen flow. The process provides clear, actionable data that supports better decision-making and lasting change.

Our Linen Summits

Crown's audit evaluates all aspects of linen management, including:

- **Total Linen Usage:** Analysis of pounds per adjusted patient day to identify over- or under-utilization.
- **Distribution Patterns:** Review of how linen moves between the laundry, storage, and point-of-use areas.
- **Storage Locations:** Examination of where clean and soiled linen is kept, ensuring compliance with infection prevention standards.
- **On-Hand Inventory:** Measurement of current stock levels and par requirements to uncover imbalances.
- **Areas of Loss:** Identification of loss points such as disposal, transfers, theft, overstocking, hoarding, and misrouting into trash or regulated medical waste.



*Before & After: A linen summit review revealed **about 1,200 scrub pieces in overstock**. After Crown staff reorganized the room and stocked to a three to four day par, the space was optimized and the excess weight was sent back to the plant for customer credit.*

Linen Summit Deliverables and Outcomes

At the conclusion of the Linen Summit, Crown delivers a comprehensive, data-rich report that includes a detailed loss estimate, quantifies the associated financial impact, and outlines a prioritized action plan tailored to each facility. This analysis highlights opportunities to reduce waste, tighten par levels, right-size inventory, and eliminate variation that drives excess cost. It also includes visual and procedural recommendations for proper storage, labeling, and bagging—standardized practices that improve workflow efficiency, support infection prevention compliance, and reduce regulated medical waste volume. To ensure these improvements become long-term habits, Crown offers optional follow-up education through QuickCare Linen Lessons™, providing targeted reinforcement at the point of care.

Crown's Linen Summits are offered as a fully complimentary service. This proactive partnership gives healthcare leaders actionable insights, measurable performance gains, and a no-cost pathway to improved operational, financial, and clinical outcomes.

White Paper Conclusion —————

Turning Waste into Sustainability

Linen management is far more than a housekeeping task—it's a critical element of healthcare operations that safeguards patient safety, clinical readiness, and financial performance. *Every sheet, towel, and gown represents both a cost and an opportunity:* to improve efficiency, reduce waste, strengthen infection control, and support a more sustainable system of care.

With the right structure in place, hospitals can reduce preventable loss, lower waste stream costs, and stabilize par levels, creating a more predictable operating environment for nursing, EVS, and supply chain teams. Through a combination of education, consistent reinforcement, and targeted process improvements, healthcare facilities can transform everyday habits into measurable outcomes and long-term cultural shifts. When staff at every level, from environmental services to executive leadership, take ownership of linen stewardship, real and lasting change follows.

As reimbursement pressures, staffing challenges, and sustainability expectations continue to rise, proactive linen management offers a proven, scalable strategy to protect margins, reduce environmental impact, and enhance patient care. Crown's partnership approach turns what was once considered unavoidable waste into a model for accountability, efficiency, and clinical safety—delivering measurable value without added capital or complexity.

About Us



For more than 70 years, Crown Health Care Laundry Services has proudly served healthcare providers across the Southeast with dependable, high-quality linen rental and laundry solutions.

At Crown, exceptional service is more than a goal, it's the foundation of who we are. Our EPIC values of *Excellence, Passion, Integrity, and Customer Service*, guide every decision, from plant operations to customer solutions. We work alongside our partners to streamline linen management, reduce costs, and ensure their staff always have the clean, reliable linen they need to provide outstanding patient care. In fact, over 2,500 hospitals, outpatient clinics, and physician offices depend on us to process over 250 million pounds of linen annually.

Crown Health Care Laundry Services is more than a vendor. We are a trusted partner dedicated to helping healthcare facilities focus on what matters most: delivering exceptional care to every patient.

Our Mission

Crown Health Care Laundry Services will be the leading quality laundry provider to healthcare throughout the Southeast United States. We strive to be recognized as the quality provider of healthcare linens to customers who demand quality products for patient care and sound linen management solutions to help reduce overall costs.

Certified Excellence

Crown Health Care Laundry Services is among the elite few to achieve all five major industry certifications—proving our uncompromising commitment to safety, quality, and performance in healthcare linen service.

These certifications guarantee more than hygienically clean linen. They ensure comfort, consistency, and confidence for every patient and every caregiver who relies on us.

Five-Fold Certification. Five-Star Treatment.



Our Executive Team



Don Haferkamp
President & CEO



Rick Hamlin
COO



Richard Marsden
CFO



Justin Mitten
Vice President East Division



Craig Waltman
Vice President West Division

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Our commitment is simple: deliver exceptional service so our customers can deliver exceptional care.

Our Sales & Service Team



Brian Branch
Customer Advocate



Ronnie Briley
Customer Advocate



Daniel Cahn
Customer Advocate



Chase Davis
Customer Advocate



Kenny Fleisher
Customer Advocate



Sev Galati
Regional Clinic Manager



Scott Gibson
Regional Sales Manager



Tim Golden
Customer Advocate



Paul Grobski
Customer Advocate



Mike Haley
Customer Advocate



Mark Hamlin
Customer Advocate



Jeffery Hammond
Regional Distribution Mgr.



Darius Jenkins
Regional Sales Manager



Stephen Lott
Customer Advocate



Todd McCutchin
Regional Sales Manager



Marie Morales
Customer Advocate



Tamara Ovdenk
Customer Advocate



Thomas Owen
Customer Advocate



Timmy Pope
Regional Clinic Manager



Robert Ryder
Regional Sales Manager



Miguel Salas
Customer Advocate



Debbie Sanchez
Customer Advocate



Leamond Shaffer
Regional Sales Manager



Allen Simmons
Customer Advocate



Ashlie Valle
Customer Advocate



Chuck Warren
Regional Sales Manager



Larry Wilson
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Josh Yoast
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Have questions? Reach out to us at contactus@crownlaundry.com or (850) 433-2600 and we'll connect you with the right team member.





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