

USP <797> & <800> in Practice: A 5-Step Playbook for Calm, Consistent Compounding

Sterile compounding standards are designed to protect patients and the people who prepare their medications. Yet many pharmacies still experience “compliance whiplash” — surges of activity before audits, followed by drift during normal operations. Replace that cycle with a calmer, more reliable rhythm grounded in USP <797> and <800>. Here’s a practical playbook that works in the real world.



1) Turn requirements into routines

Policies live on paper; safety lives in routine. Begin by mapping every requirement to a visible, daily behavior. Garbing becomes a brief, coached ritual. Cleanroom readiness becomes a simple visual sweep with a shared checklist. If a step matters, make it routine enough to become muscle memory.

2) Appoint a designated teacher

USP <797> calls for a designated person; the team needs a designated teacher. Pick someone who can translate standards into plain language and coach technique without intimidation. Give them authority, time on the schedule and an audience: five-minute floor huddles, short refreshers at shift start and open “ask anything” sessions. Teaching lowers anxiety, improves aseptic technique and

builds trust that shows up in fewer excursions.

3) Make monitoring a story, not a score

Environmental and personnel monitoring are often treated as pass/fail events. Flip that: monitoring should tell a story about control. Plot your air, surface and personnel metrics over time and annotate changes. When the team can see why data moves, they anticipate drift and fix issues early. Keep the story on one page: "What moved, why, what we changed." This reinforces learning and turns inspections into confirmation, not surprise.

4) Close the loop on hazardous drug safety

USP <800> is about consistency, not complexity. Standardize the journey of hazardous drugs with clear boundaries and signage. Too often a step in the HD lifecycle is overlooked. Focus on receipt, storage, compounding, waste and transport. In practice, that looks like well-marked areas, predictable negative pressure spaces and device use that's boringly consistent. When this loop is automatic, your team's exposure risk drops and confidence rises.

5) Coach the craft (and reward it)

Aseptic technique is a craft. The fastest improvements happen in the primary engineering control, with sleeves rolled (not literally), watching real work. Use fingertip and media-fill results to guide one-on-one coaching: posture, pace, placement. Celebrate wins, give shout-outs and tie recognition to observable behaviors. When people see technique celebrated, they invest in it.

Putting it together: calm beats urgent

The net effect of this playbook is calm, not complacent. Teams that teach, visualize and coach see fewer environmental surprises, fewer documentation corrections and more predictable inspection outcomes. Patients experience what the standards intend: sterile preparations prepared by confident professionals in controlled spaces.