

Jun 2, 2026

Smooth Sailing: How WM and Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings Ltd. Are Supporting Environmental Standards

Getting ships ready—safely and efficiently—in a matter of hours

-

-

-

-

-



When a cruise ship arrives at port, what follows looks less like routine maintenance and more like a choreographed pit crew—where every move follows a precise sequence, and every step must meet strict regulatory requirements.

Thousands of passengers disembark within hours. At the same time, teams work behind the scenes to collect, process and manage what's left behind—preparing the ship for its next voyage under strict international, federal and port-specific regulatory requirements governing how waste is handled, moved and treated.

From regulated food waste and recyclables to medical waste generated onboard, cruise operations involve complex material streams that must be handled in accordance with regulatory requirements and established handling protocols. Navigating those demands requires calm execution under pressure and the ability to keep operations on schedule without compromising compliance.

That level of precision and accountability is the role WM plays for Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings Ltd. (NCLH).

Together, the two organizations have built a long-standing relationship grounded in transparency, integrity and continuous improvement: one designed to evolve alongside a growing cruise industry and rising expectations for environmental responsibility.



Built on Trust

Cruise lines operate within a dense web of environmental and public health requirements. In the U.S., any food-related or organic material that crosses an international border becomes regulated waste. Medical waste adds another layer of complexity, requiring specialized handling to protect people and the environment.

This collaboration supports NCLH's Sail & Sustain program, which focuses on advancing environmental stewardship, strengthening communities and embedding responsible practices across multiple U.S. ports.

"In this environment, trust and accountability are essential," said Heike Naigur, senior director of sustainability, Norwegian Cruise Line. "WM delivers the reliability and transparency we need to operate responsibly while supporting compliance and contributing to our Sail & Sustain priorities."

WM supports NCL across several U.S. ports, working within tight turnaround windows and managing highly regulated waste streams with consistency and care. For NCL, that reliability helps manage regulatory compliance risk while ensuring ships are ready for their next departure on schedule.

PortMiami: Designed for Complex Materials Management



At PortMiami - home to Norwegian Cruise Line's only owned and operated terminal - materials management is part of a fast-moving operation that leaves little room for delays. Ships arrive and depart on tight schedules, and multiple regulated material streams must be managed correctly every time.

WM and NCL worked together to design port operations that account for all major material streams. Systems for regulated waste, medical waste, recycling and everyday solid waste are built directly into daily workflows. **These include USDA-compliant handling processes**, automated handling for non-regulated waste, and dockside logistics designed to improve dockside traffic flow, which can contribute to more efficient operations.

By planning for complexity up front, the terminal incorporates regulatory requirements into everyday operations—

while keeping ship turnarounds on schedule.

Solutions Beyond the Basics

As public health and environmental requirements have become central to cruise operations, WM has expanded its regulated and medical waste capabilities—allowing customers like NCL to rely on a single partner across multiple material streams.

“Highly regulated environments demand clarity and coordination,” said Jason Wrubel, territory manager, WM Sustainability Services. “By integrating regulated, medical and recycling services, we help customers stay focused on operations while preserving the controls needed to protect people and the environment.”

That integrated approach extends beyond reliability. During ship renovations, WM and NCL work to support more material reuse and recycling by redirecting furniture, linens, mattresses, electronics and other materials for potential reuse or recycling whenever possible.



NCL has also implemented a crew recycling rebate program in collaboration with WM, returning 100 percent of eligible recycling rebates directly to crew members. The program encourages proper material separation onboard and reinforces high-quality recycling practices voyage after voyage.

Preparing for the Future of Cruising



As cruise travel continues to grow globally, materials management systems must be able to scale with it. WM's continued investment in infrastructure—including a new \$90 million recycling facility near Miami, WM Recycling South Florida—is designed to support growth while helping to improve the circular economy.

Together, WM and Norwegian Cruise Line are showing how integrated solutions help keep ships on schedule—supporting operational reliability and environmental compliance in each turnaround.

<https://mediaroom.wm.com/Smooth-Sailing-How-WM-and-Norwegian-Cruise-Line-Holdings-Ltd-Are-Supporting-Environmental-Standards>