

Home-Generated Medical Sharps Disposal

Household Hazardous Waste



Over 3 billion needles are thrown into the trash each year by individuals treating themselves in their homes for conditions such as diabetes. Even when placed into a secured container (sharps container) needles can still injure someone, as these containers can break open when compacted by a garbage truck. Solid waste workers are stuck with needles and must go through months of testing for HIV and hepatitis because they do not know where the needles came from, or what diseases they may carry.

Home-Generated Sharps Disposal Legislation

Beginning on September 1, 2008, State law ([Section 118286](#) of the California Health and Safety Code) makes it illegal to dispose of home-generated sharps waste in the trash or recycling containers, and requires that all sharps waste be transported to a collection center in an approved sharps container.

[Section 117671](#) of the California Health and Safety Code defines "home-generated sharps waste" as hypodermic needles, pen needles, intravenous needles, lancets, and other devices that are used to penetrate the skin for the delivery of medications derived from a household, including a multifamily residence or household.

Disposal Sites for Household Hazardous Waste

Call your local household hazardous waste department to determine the appropriate way to dispose of sharps waste in your city or county. Many collection facilities are the same facilities that collect your fluorescent lights and batteries.

Visit <http://www.calrecycle.ca.gov/homehazwaste/sharps/> where you can get information on "home-generated sharps" and resources in your area. The following site will direct you to where you can dispose of pharmaceuticals that are no longer needed or expired preventing misuse and environmental impacts <http://www.calrecycle.ca.gov/homehazwaste/Medications/>. You can also receive information at www.Earth911.org. If you are unable to locate a disposal site, a list of California approved mail back sharps containers are listed at <http://www.cdph.ca.gov/certlic/medicalwaste/Documents/MedicalWaste/SharpsMailBackList.pdf>.

Some hospitals may take home-generated sharps from patients receiving regular outpatient services. Check with your hospital before bringing sharps to the facility.

Some pharmacies will agree to accept home-generated sharps from people that purchase their sharps at that pharmacy. Call your pharmacy to find out if they provide this service.

Waste Containers

Sharps waste containers can be purchased at your local pharmacy or on the internet. The following site will allow you to enter your zip code and tell you where in your area you can purchase a sharps container <http://www.sharpsinc.com/locations/>. Some mail order pharmacies and certain drug manufacturers will include a sharps container with your sharps order so check with your provider.

Learn More about Safe Disposal

You can learn more by visiting the Food & Drug Administration's updated website: <http://www.fda.gov/MedicalDevices/ProductsandMedicalProcedures/HomeHealthandConsumer/ConsumerProducts/Sharps/ucm20025647.htm#stuck>