

WHERE TO DISPOSE OF RESIDENTIAL SHARPS

Within DOUGLAS COUNTY

What is Sharps waste?

According to Washington State law (chapter 70.95KRCW), sharps waste are all hypodermic needles, syringes with needles attached, IV tubing with needles attached, scalpel blades and lancets that have been removed from their original sterile container. "Residential sharps waste" are defined as all sharps waste that are generated and prepared for disposal at a residence, apartment, dwelling or other noncommercial habitat. Residential care facilities, group homes, nursing homes, hospitals, clinics and other commercial generators of sharps are classified as commercial generators and do not qualify for residential sharps drop-off program.

What are the requirements for properly disposing of my residential Sharps?

As also outlined in RCW.95K, no person shall intentionally place an unprotected sharps or a sharps waste container into:

- recycling containers provided by a city, county, or solid waste collection company, or any other recycling collection site unless that site is specifically designated by the local health department as a drop-off site for sharps waste containers;
- cans, carts, drop boxes, or other containers in which refuse, trash, or solid waste has been placed for collection if a source separated collection service is provided for residential sharps waste.

Why do we need a program?

It is estimated by the American Diabetic Association that more than a billion needles are disposed of each year by diabetics who self-administer insulin, 90% of which are disposed of in the municipal waste stream. These needles, along with those generated by home health care patients, individuals needing allergy shots and non-medical injection drug users (IDUs), create a hazard to our community. If these residential sharps are not disposed of properly, they can injure individuals and waste handlers, increase the risk of infection and can pollute the environment.

The person with diabetes, allergies or any other medical condition requiring them to self-inject, has had to undergo a significant behavior change. As such, the proper disposal of used sharps is often lost in the complexity of dealing with the medical condition itself.

What does this mean to me?

This regulation means that if you are a residential sharps user, you need to dispose of the sharps in a way that is consistent with protecting sanitation workers, the community and the environment.

You can do this by carefully reading and following the instructions in this brochure.

STEPS FOR PROPER DISPOSAL OF SHARPS WASTE:

Step #1: Purchase an approved "Sharps Waste Container" from your local pharmacy at the time you purchase your sharps. Or use a leak-proof, rigid, puncture-resistant plastic container (a liquid detergent bottle is recommended).

Step #2: At home, place your approved sharps waste container out of the reach of children or animals.

Note: Glass bottles, coffee cans, soda cans, milk cartons and plastic milk jugs are not acceptable as sharps containers. They are easily broken or punctured by needles. It is recommended that empty 2-liter soda bottles not be used, for children may be attracted to them and they may mistakenly be placed in your recycling bin.

Step #3: Properly label your approved sharps waste container. All sharps waste container labels must be fluorescent orange, orange-red or predominantly so with the following information in contrasting color:

Infection Waste

Biohazard

International Biohazard Symbol

Warning: Sharps

Do Not Recycle

Step #4: Do not bend or break the needle or syringe. Do not put the cap back on the needle after use. Do not force needles or syringes into the sharps waste container. Do not overfill our sharps waste container. It is recommended that you close and seal your container when it about 2/3 full.

Step #5: Once full, permanently close the top of your sharps waste container following the directions given. If using a leak-proof, rigid, puncture-resistant container, such as a detergent bottle, reinforce the lid with heavy-duty tape, such as duct tape. **Remember to label the sharps waste container!**

Step #6: Now your residential sharps are protected in an approved sharps waste container, and no longer pose a threat of needle sticks to handlers. Your sharps waste container can be dropped off at any of the participating pharmacies or approved Residential Sharps Drop-Off sites. Once properly disposed of, your sharps waste container will not be returned to you. Do not leave sharps containers unattended.

How to Participate in the Residential Sharps Drop-Off Program in Douglas County

This is a drop-off program for household residents ONLY. Residential care facilities, group homes, hospitals, clinics and other commercial generators of sharps are not eligible for this program and should contact a medical waste management company. Households that generate residential sharps within unincorporated Douglas County and the cities of Bridgeport, East Wenatchee, Rock Island and the towns of Mansfield and Waterville are eligible to participate in this drop-off program. By participating in this program, you are protecting your family, your community, waste handlers and the environment.

- Purchase an approved sharps waste container from a participating pharmacy when you buy your sharps. They are inexpensive and hold from 30 to 300 used sharps, depending upon the size of the container.
- Place your container in a convenient location in your home, but out of reach of children and animals.
- Perform routine blood tests and injections, and place the used sharps into the approved container. Tightly seal the container when it becomes full.
- Take your approved sharps waste container to a participating pharmacy or approved Residential Sharps Drop-Off site. Give the container to the pharmacist or staff person, never leave the container unattended.
- Residential Sharps collected through this drop-off program will be properly disposed of in compliance with all medical waste regulations.

The following Associations support a Residential Sharps Drop-Off Program:

The American Medical Association The American Diabetes Association
The Washington State Board of Pharmacy

Where Can I Properly Dispose of My Sharps Waste Container?

Greater East Wenatchee area:

East Wenatchee City Hall 884-9515
271 Ninth Street N.E.

Costco Pharmacy 886-0754
375 Highline Drive South

Bi-Mart Pharmacy 884-4022
780 Grant Road

Eastmont Pharmacy 884-7254
630 Valley Mall Parkway
Redi-Medi 888-6334

Fred Meyer Pharmacy 881-2833
11 West Grant Road

Bridgeport area:

Community Recycling Center 686-4041
1st Saturday of the Month 9am-11am

Gross Drug 686-5191
20 Foster Creek

3rd Thursday of the Month 5pm-7pm

Mansfield area:

Community Recycling Center 683-1112
Every Other Saturday 9am-12pm

Rock Island area;

Community Recycling Center 884-1261
April-October Monday-Friday 8am-3pm
November-March Monday-Thursday 8:30am-3:30pm Friday 8:30am-2pm

Waterville area:

Community Recycling Center 745-8871 Tuesday & Saturday 2pm-4pm

Sharps Pointers

DO:

- ✓ *Keep sharps waste containers out of the reach of children and animals.*
- ✓ *Use a sharps waste container that is properly labeled, leak-proof, rigid and made of puncture –resistant plastic.*
- ✓ *Properly label all sharps waste containers.*
- ✓ *Securely seal the top of our sharps waste container.*
- ✓ *Handle sharps used away from home in a responsible manner.*
- ✓ *Participate in a Residential Sharps Drop-Off Program.*
- ✓ *Patronize participating pharmacies.*

DON'T:

- *Don't put sharps in glass bottles, coffee or soda cans, milk cartons and plastic milk jugs.*
- *Don't leave loose needles or lancets around where they can be accessed by children or animals.*
- *Don't throw sharps into recycling bins, trash cans or dumpsters.*
- *Don't flush sharps down the toilet.*
- *Don't break, bend or reuse needles.*
- *Don't leave sharps waste containers unattended.*

For more waste reduction & recycling information contact:

**COUNTYWIDE SOLID WASTE PROGRAMS
OF DOUGLAS COUNTY
(509) 886-0899**

