
ENVIRONMENTAL Fact Sheet



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Disposal Tips for Household Generated Sharps

Household generated “sharps” include hypodermic needles and syringes, lancets and infusion sets. They are typically used in the home for insulin injections or for administering other medications.

Household generated sharps should be disposed of appropriately to help prevent injury and illness to family members and waste handlers, and to reduce pollution to the environment.



Environmental Management of Sharps

NHDES regulates the disposal of household generated sharps (see New Hampshire Solid Waste Rule Env-Sw 904.01(b)(3)). Household generated sharps may be disposed of with household trash, if:

1. They are enclosed inside a rigid, puncture-resistant container, such as a plastic bleach or laundry detergent bottle;
2. The screw-top of the container is securely taped closed with heavy-duty tape, such as duct tape;
3. The container is labeled, “Medical Sharps Container – Not for Recycling;” and
4. The container is disposed of at a facility that is authorized to accept it.

Printable labels stating “Medical Sharps Container! Not For Recycling” are included in this fact sheet. Printable labels are also available on the NHDES website. If printed on regular paper, secure the labels to the container with clear packing tape.

Although placing household generated sharps in the regular trash is not prohibited when following the above provisions, some solid waste disposal facilities do not accept sharps. Always check with your disposal facility or trash hauler before putting your household sharps in the trash.

An alternative is to use a **Container Exchange** or **Mail Back Program** that supplies empty containers for clients to fill with sharps and return for safe disposal. There may be a charge for such services. Patients using certain drugs are eligible for safe needle disposal directly from pharmaceutical (i.e., drug) manufacturers. Other alternatives include using a specially designed needle cutter or incineration device purchased from your pharmacy. Go to www.safeneedledisposal.org for more information or talk to your pharmacist and health care provider.

REMEMBER!

NEVER throw loose sharps into the trash or toilet!

NEVER leave sharps anywhere they could injure someone!

NEVER store used sharps in glass bottles, soda bottles, milk jugs, aluminum cans, coffee cans or plastic bags!

NEVER put containers with used sharps in a recycling bin!

For more information, contact:

NH Department of Environmental Services

Waste Management Division, Solid Waste Management Bureau

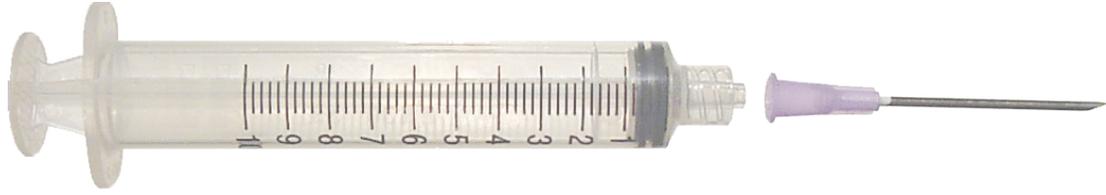
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