
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 injection 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

The Department of Environmental Services (DES) regulates the disposal of household generated sharps (see NH Solid Waste Administrative Rule Env-Sw 904.01(b)(3)). Household generated sharps may be disposed of with household trash, provided:

1. Sharps 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.” Printable labels are available on the DES website. Go to www.des.nh.gov, click on “A to Z List” and scroll down to “Sharps Disposal.” While supplies last, labels may also be available at your local transfer station.

Although placing household generated sharps in the regular trash is allowed, some solid waste disposal facilities do not accept sharps. Therefore, before putting your sharps in the trash, check with your disposal facility or trash hauler first. An alternative is to use a **Container Mail Back Program** that distributes empty containers for clients to fill and return for safe disposal. There may be a charge for such services, but patients using certain products are eligible for safe needle disposal directly from pharmaceutical manufacturers. Go to www.safeneedledisposal.org for more information. Other alternatives include using a specially designed needle cutter or incineration device purchased from your pharmacy.

New Hampshire Department of Transportation (DOT) Sharps Program

The DOT's blood borne pathogen safety program provides collection containers for travelers to dispose of sharps at the Hooksett and Seabrook rest areas. The program is designed to protect other travelers and the DOT workers that empty the trash from being stuck by sharps that have the potential to transmit blood borne diseases. The containers are "one-way" disposal units and contain a spring-loaded "door" that allow material to be disposed of but not retrieved. For further information on the DOT program, contact Al Barrington, Bureau of Turnpikes, at (603) 485-3806 or abarrington@dot.state.nh.us.

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 about proper sharps disposal, contact the DES Solid Waste Management Bureau during regular business hours at 603-271-2925 or via email at solidwasteinfo@des.nh.gov, and talk to your pharmacist and health care provider.