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# ENVIRONMENTAL Fact Sheet

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SW-31

2022

## Disposal Tips for Household Generated Sharps

Household generated “sharps” include hypodermic needles and syringes, lancets, infusion sets, and auto-injectors. 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.**”
4. The container is disposed of at a facility that is authorized to accept it.



Simply **recapping a syringe is not adequate** to protect against needle sticks.

A printable label stating “Medical Sharps Container! Not For Recycling!” is included with this fact sheet. If printed on regular paper, secure the label 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 container in the trash.

### Alternative Options for Safe Sharps Disposal

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. **Safe needle cutters** clip the needle tip off and allow the user to throw away the rest of the syringe, such as the plastic part, in the trash. When the clipping device is full, wrap it with heavy duty tape and then dispose with your household trash. Make sure the tape covers the sharps insert hole.

Go to [www.safeneedledisposal.org](http://www.safeneedledisposal.org) for more information or talk to your pharmacist or 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  
PO Box 95  
Concord, NH 03302-0095  
[\(603\) 271-2925](tel:6032712925)  
[solidwasteinfo@des.nh.gov](mailto:solidwasteinfo@des.nh.gov)

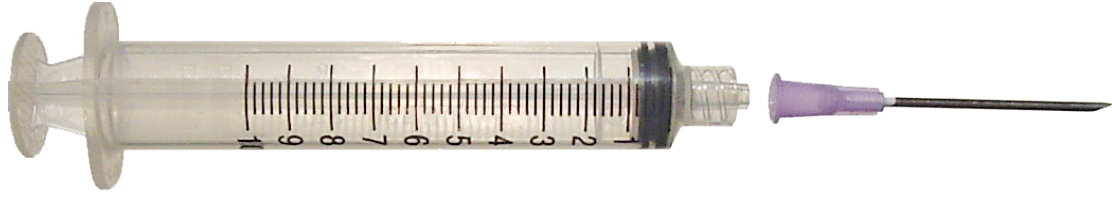
A paper copy of the rules may be obtained by contacting the NHDES Public Information Center at the above noted mailing address or [\(603\) 271-8876](tel:6032718876).

*Note: This fact sheet is accurate as of December 2022. Statutory or regulatory changes or the availability of additional information after this date may render this information inaccurate or incomplete.*



**Did You Know?**  
Some safe needle cutters can hold up to 1,500 needle tips!

**MEDICAL SHARPS CONTAINER!**



**NOT FOR RECYCLING!**

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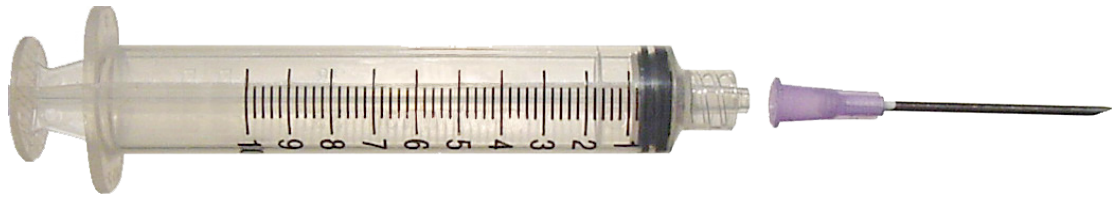
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