

## Safe Needle (Sharps) Disposal – State Requirements

**Alabama** – Place needles and other contaminated sharps in a red sharps container or any puncture-resistant, resealable, disposable container (examples include an empty bleach bottle, laundry detergent bottle, or metal coffee can). Choose a container that is made of plastic or metal and one that has a small opening so no one can stick his or her hand into it. Do not use clear plastic or glass containers. Using an EASY TO READ marker, write on the container – “DO NOT RECYCLE”. Sharps are not recyclable. Once your container is full of used needles, fill the container with 1 part bleach solution and 10 parts of water. Allow solution to soak for 20 minutes; this action will sterilize your used sharps. Then, pour the solution into the sink and seal the cap with heavy-duty tape (duct tape) before placing the disposal container into your regular household garbage. Be sure to keep all containers with discarded sharps out of reach of children and pets. If you would like to bring your sealed container to a community sharps disposal program, there are drop-off locations in Elmore and Madison counties.

**Alaska** – Individuals who use syringes at home are responsible for ensuring that their used syringes are stored in a way that does not cause a health hazard and that they are decontaminated before disposal. Place all sharps and potentially infectious waste in a red sharps container or puncture resistant container with a sealing lid like a one-liter soda bottle, one gallon juice container, or plastic laundry detergent container. Clearly label the container as medical waste (example SHARPS: DO NOT OPEN!), seal tightly, and tape closed for added safety. The container can be put in the household trash. The Department of Environmental Conservation prefers that medical waste be disposed through medical service providers or medical waste disposal professionals. However, if you do not have access to a medical waste service provider, clinic that is able to treat medical waste, or a medical waste disposal company, you must handle medical waste carefully to protect yourself and others such as waste collection workers and landfill workers. This can be done either by taking used syringes to a site such as a hospital or medical center that accepts sharps. If you would like to bring your sealed container to a community sharps disposal program, there are drop-off locations in several locations, including Anchorage, Juneau, Kenai Peninsula Borough and Matanuska-Susitna Borough.

**Arizona** – To dispose of used sharps, use either a rigid sharps container or a hard plastic container for trash disposal. Close the lid tightly, wrap the lid with duct tape and write, “DO NOT RECYCLE” in large letters. To maximize space, you can use a needle cutter or destroyer (severs needles from the syringe and costs anywhere from \$5 to \$140). You can

also use a mail-back program that will send you special containers and packaging, dispose of them properly and send you a new empty set to refill. If you would like to bring your sealed container to a community sharps program, there are drop-off locations in these counties: Cochise, Gila, Pinal and Santa Cruz.

**Arkansas** – To safely dispose of household-generated contaminated sharps, place all sharps in leak-proof containers. Rigid sharps containers or thick plastic, puncture resistant containers (such as liquid soap, laundry soap or fabric softener containers) should be used. The container must have a cap or lid that can be tightly secured to protect against any accidental exposure. Once the container is 2/3 full, it is ready for disinfection and disposal. Soak the contaminated needles and sharps in a solution of 1 part bleach “to no more than 10 parts of water (1:10 dilution), for at least 10 minutes”. This 1:10 bleach solution should be introduced into the sharps container, covering all the contents completely, and then allowed to sit for at least 10 minutes. After soaking, the excess liquid solution should be drained into a sink drain. The excess bleach solution must be drained prior to disposal of the container of disinfected sharps. The sharps container must be securely closed before double-bagging for disposal as regular solid waste. If you would like to bring your sealed container to a community sharps disposal program, there are drop-off locations in Benton County, Madison County and Washington County.

**California** – It is illegal to dispose of home-generated sharps waste in the trash or recycling containers. Used sharps must be placed in a strong, plastic container to be disposed of safely. There are many types of containers available. If you do not have a container made specifically to hold used sharps, a strong plastic container – like an empty laundry detergent or bleach bottle- may also be used. When the container is  $\frac{3}{4}$  full, put the lid on, seal it with duct tape and label DO NOT RECYCLE. State law requires that all sharps waste be transported to a collection center “in a sharps containers or other containers approved by the enforcement agency.” Most counties in California have disposal programs. Call the program to confirm if there are any container requirements, disposal fees or residency restrictions. Residents may also be eligible for free sharps containers and mail-back services through The Drug Takeback Solutions Foundation and MED-Project. Other programs may be offered by the pharmaceutical companies. Please contact the programs for more information.

**Colorado** – Used sharps should never be placed loosely in your trash or flushed down the toilet. The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment recommends sharps be collected in a sharps container and sent to a collection site for proper disposal. There are drop-off locations in several counties. The sharps should be placed in a strong, heavy

plastic or metal container with a screw-on or tightly-secured lid. Glass should never be used as a sharps container because the glass can break. Containers like empty bleach bottles, liquid detergent bottles, or heavy plastic jugs work well because they are strong enough to prevent the sharps from poking through the container and they have lids that can be securely fastened. A coffee can may also be used as long as the lid is sealed with strong tape once the container is full. The sealed container should be clearly labeled with the words “Used Sharps”. Some local and national pharmacies offer mail-back sharps disposal systems for purchase. However, most medical offices, fire departments, and hospitals do not offer disposal services. If you cannot use any of these options, household-generated sharps may be disposed of in your trash as a last option. Do not put containers with sharps in your recyclables bin.

**Connecticut** – To properly dispose of sharps: Seal them in rigid, puncture-resistant containers that you can’t see through (i.e. bleach or detergent bottles, coffee cans, etc.); label the containers “Do Not Recycle;” and reinforce containers with heavy-duty tape before throwing them in your household trash. Do not throw loose needles in the trash, flush needles down the toilet, place needles in soda bottles/cans/glass containers or put sharps containers in the recycling bin. The Connecticut Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (DEEP) recommends checking with your supplier (i.e. your physician, local hospital, or pharmacy) to see if they are willing to accept properly packaged used sharps. Some companies even offer mail-back disposal services to their customers. At this time, there are no community sponsored sharps disposal programs in the state.

**Delaware** – Household sharps (i.e. needles and syringes) may be disposed of in trash. The following steps should be followed in order to ensure proper disposal: Needles and syringes should be placed in a liquid detergent bottle or coffee can. When full, the lid should be taped on to the bottle or can. The container, bottle or can should be double bagged and placed in the trash; preferably at the bottom half of the trash can to prevent tampering. The Delaware Solid Waste Authority (DSWA) accepts sharps during household hazardous waste collection events. For more information about HHW collection events, call the Citizen’s Response Line at 800-404-7080 or visit the DSWA website.

**District of Columbia** – Place needles, syringes and other contaminated sharps in a sharps container or any puncture-resistant, resealable disposable household container (examples include an empty bleach bottle, laundry detergent bottle or metal coffee can). It is recommended to choose a container that has a small opening so no one can stick his or her hand into it. Do not recap, purposely bend, break or otherwise manipulate needles

before inserting them into the disposal container. Drop all parts into the container. Once your container is full of used needles, fill the container with 1 part bleach solution and 10 parts water. Allow the solution to soak for 20 minutes; this action will sterilize your used sharps. Then, pour the solution into the sink and seal the cap with tape (use a heavy-duty tape, such as duct tape). Before placing the disposal container into the garbage, using a RED marker, write on the container – “BIOHAZARD – DO NOT RECYCLE”. The color Red is required to indicate a biohazard waste. Dispose of the container into your regular trash, but do not use glass or clear plastic containers. Used needles and other contaminated sharps are NOT recyclable. Be sure to keep all containers with discarded sharps out of the reach of children and pets. At this time, there are no community sponsored sharps disposal programs in the District of Columbia.

**Florida** – Many counties have a needle program with drop-off locations. Many locations require the storage of used sharps in a red sharps container. Check with the individual facility to confirm container requirements. A list can be found on the Florida Department of Health website. If your county does not have a needle program or you cannot use a needle mail-back service, check with your local garbage company and dump to see if you are allowed to throw your needles out with your household garbage. If this is okay, then put needles in a container that has a lid and that is strong enough to keep the needles from sticking through the sides, such as liquid detergent bottles or metal cans. Throw the container away before it is full all the way to the top. Put the container lid on tight and use heavy tape to keep it on. Put the container in the center of your garbage.

**Georgia** - The Department of Natural Resources does not provide written recommendations for disposing of home-generated sharps. However, individuals are responsible for ensuring that their used sharps are stored in a way that does not cause a health hazard. Put used sharps in a strong, plastic container. When the container is  $\frac{3}{4}$  full, put the lid on, seal it with duct tape and label DO NOT RECYCLE. Put the plastic container in the household trash. Don't recycle. If you would like to bring your sealed container to a community sharps disposal program, there are drop-off locations in Athens-Clarke County and Floyd County.

**Hawaii** – Place needles and sharps in any strong, leak-proof plastic containers, such as empty bleach, laundry detergent or dish soap containers. The container should have a small opening so that no one else is able to stick their hand into it. You do not have to recap, purposely bend, break or otherwise manipulate needles before inserting them into the disposal container. Drop all parts into the container. Sharps should be sterilized or be chemically disinfected prior to disposal. Once your container is full, fill the container with

1 part bleach solution and 10 parts water. Allow the solution to soak for 20 minutes. Then, pour the solution into the sink and seal the cap with heavy-duty tape (duct tape). The container must also be clearly marked "BIOHAZARD" before placing the disposal container into the garbage. Used needles and other contaminated sharps are NOT recyclable. Be sure to keep all containers with discarded sharps out of the reach of children and pets. At this time, there are no community-sponsored sharps disposal programs in the state.

**Idaho** - Household-generated sharps may be disposed of with trash. Place used sharps in a strong, plastic container. When the container is  $\frac{3}{4}$  full, fill the empty space with sand, coffee grounds or cat litter. Put the lid on, seal it with duct tape and label DO NOT RECYCLE. Hide the plastic container in the trash. Don't recycle! Contact your local solid waste management company or county/city government to determine if special requirements apply. It is recommended to dispose of sharps at a hazardous waste facility or local collection event. If you would like to bring your sealed container to a community sharps disposal program, there are drop-off locations in several counties.

**Illinois** - Medical sharps should be placed in either a purchased medical sharps container (from a pharmacy or health care provider) or a heavy-plastic or metal container. The containers should be puncture-proof with a tight-fitting lid. Household containers such as plastic detergent bottles can be used if the following precautions are observed: Use heavy-duty tape such as electrical or duct tape to secure the lid to the container, Write the words "Do Not Recycle" on the container with a black permanent marker. This helps to ensure the container will not be inadvertently mingled with recyclable materials, Double-bag the container in a couple of plastic shopping bags (i.e. grocery store bags) once the lid has been taped and the container has been marked, Do not use a clear or glass container, Do not over-stuff the containers with medical sharps (fill only to approximately full). This can increase pressure on the lid and cause a release of the medical sharps. While waiting for a full container, keep out of reach of children and pets. Although other methods of disposal are preferred, the container may be placed in your regular trash for disposal, if these precautions have been followed. If you would like to bring your sealed container to a community sharps disposal program, there are drop-off locations in several cities and towns.

**Indiana** – Used sharps should be put in a strong plastic container. When the container is  $\frac{3}{4}$  full, put the lid on, seal it with duct tape and label DO NOT RECYCLE. Put the plastic container in the household trash. Don't recycle! If you would like to bring your sealed container to a community sharps disposal program, there are drop-off locations in several counties.

**Iowa** – Put used sharps in a strong, plastic container. Do not store used sharps in glass bottles, soda bottles, milk jugs, aluminum cans and coffee cans. When the container is  $\frac{3}{4}$  full, put the lid on, seal it with duct tape and label DO NOT RECYCLE. Put the plastic container in the household trash. Don't recycle! If you would like to bring your sealed container to a community sharps disposal program, there are drop-off locations in several cities and towns. Call ahead as there may be acceptance criteria.

**Kansas** – Residents may dispose of sharps with other trash. Containers that may be used for medical sharps include metal containers with a screw on lid, special purchased sharps container, a bleach container, a liquid soap container or a laundry soap container. Glass jars, coffee cans with a snap-on lid, a 2-liter beverage container, plastic milk jug, plastic bag and aluminum cans should not be used. Always use heavy-duty tape (such as duct tape) to secure lids to the containers. Fill to approximately  $\frac{2}{3}$  full and do not overstuff. If you would like to bring your sealed container to a community sharps disposal program, there are drop-off locations in these counties: Harvey, Labette, Leavenworth, Osborne, Phillips, Riley, Seward, Sherman and Shawnee. In addition, some county health departments accept sharps from residents. Check locally to determine the availability of such services. Local pharmacies, hospitals and other medical facilities do not generally allow public drop-off of sharps for disposal.

**Kentucky** – Sharps (needles, syringes and lancets) can be discarded with everyday household trash. The Division of Compliance Assistance recommends to immediately place used needles and other sharps in a sharps disposal container to reduce the risk of needle sticks, cuts or punctures. If using a household container, use a heavy-duty plastic or metal household container with a screw-on lid. A good example of a household container is a laundry detergent bottle. If using a plastic container, look for the ♻️ HDPE symbol to make sure the plastic is strong enough not to be pierced by the sharps. Be careful not to overfill your sharps container. A good rule of thumb is to fill the container two-thirds of the way. Clearly label household sharps containers with “DO NOT RECYCLE” and “SHARPS”. When disposing of the container, screw the cap on tightly and cover the top and cap with a strong tape, like duct tape. Dispose with household trash. Make sure the garbage container has a lid to prevent tampering. There are different potential disposal options, including drop-off collection sites (Boyle, Calloway, Louisville and Webster counties), syringe exchange programs, household hazardous waste collections, mail-back programs, residential special waste pickup services and home needle destruction devices. Not all these options are available across the Commonwealth. It is recommended to call your solid waste hauler, municipal government

(ask for the person who oversees solid waste disposal), or local health department to determine which of these options are available in your area.

**Louisiana** – The state Department of Health and Hospitals requires households to package their medical waste in tightly closed, wrapped containers before discarding them in household garbage. Put used sharps in a strong, plastic container. When the container is  $\frac{3}{4}$  full, put the lid on, seal it with duct tape and label DO NOT RECYCLE. Put the plastic container in the household trash. Don't recycle! At this time, there are no community-sponsored sharps disposal programs in the state.

**Maine** – Individuals are allowed under Maine law to dispose of household medical sharps in your household trash, if you take the proper precautions to secure and label the container before doing so. You can make your own sharps container using a heavy puncture-proof plastic bottle, like for laundry detergent. Place sharps in the bottle and when it's full, seal it with the cap and heavy-duty tape, mark "Do Not Recycle" and place in your household trash. Rigid home sharps containers with locking lids may be placed in your household trash when full. Needle clipping devices that clip the needle off a syringe allow you to throw the remaining piece in your household trash. When the device is full, wrap it in heavy-duty tape and throw it in the trash bin. You can request a free needle clipping device, courtesy of the Maine Department of Environmental Protection, Becton, Dickinson and Company and Rite Aid Pharmacy. Pre-paid mail-back containers or envelopes are available for purchase. If you would like to bring your sealed container to a community sharps disposal program, there are drop-off locations in Aroostock County and Kennebec County. When you are away from home, all Maine Turnpike Authority rest stops, some Maine airports and some retail stores have sharps disposal boxes for use.

**Maryland** – Individuals are responsible for ensuring that their used sharps are stored in a way that does not cause a health hazard. Put used sharps in a strong, plastic container. When the container is  $\frac{3}{4}$  full, put the lid on it, seal it with duct tape and label DO NOT RECYCLE. Put the plastic container in the household trash. Don't recycle! If you would like to bring your sealed container to a community sharps disposal program, there are drop-off locations in these counties: Anne Arundel, Cecil, Frederick, Hartford, St. Mary's and Washington.

**Massachusetts** – Residents must take sealed containers of used sharps to a drop-off site or arrange a mail-back service. Sharps should be put in a strong, plastic container. When the container is  $\frac{3}{4}$  full, put the lid on, seal it with duct tape, and label DO NOT RECYCLE. Do not throw in the trash. Most Massachusetts communities have a disposal drop-off

location or accept sharps at household hazardous waste day events. Disposal sites will not accept loose needles or sharps in bags or glass containers. Call the program to confirm if there are any container requirements, disposal fees or residency restrictions. If there is no program in your community, contact your city or county health department.

**Michigan** - Put used sharps in a strong, plastic container. When the container is  $\frac{3}{4}$  full, put the lid on, seal it with duct tape, and label DO NOT RECYCLE. Put the plastic container in the household trash. If you would like to bring your sealed container to a community sharps disposal program, there are drop-off locations in several counties. The Medical Waste Regulatory Program, Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy (EGLE) maintains a list of sharps collection programs throughout the state.

**Minnesota** - In the state, it is up to each pharmacy, healthcare facility, city and county to decide whether they want to collect household sharps from citizens. Dispose of sharps in a sturdy plastic container with a screw-on lid, like an empty laundry detergent bottle. Clearly label it: "Do not recycle: Household sharps". Do not store sharps in glass bottles, aluminum cans, coffee cans, milk jugs, or plastic water or soda bottles, since these can break or be punctured. You can also purchase a sharps container or ask your health care provider or pharmacy if they can give you one. Place needles in point-first, and don't fill more than half-full. If your sharps container does not have a tight screw-on lid, use strong tape, such as duct tape, to secure the lid and any openings. You may purchase pre-paid household sharps mailers to send your full sharps container to a disposal facility. If you would like to bring your sealed container to a community sharps disposal program, there are drop-off locations in several counties. If you cannot get to a household sharps collection site, you may legally place your labeled, closed, sharps container into your normal trash. The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency discourages this option for safety reasons, unless the other options are not practical.

**Mississippi** – The Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) recommends that home syringe users inquire into the availability of the following options for sharps disposal: local drop-off programs, sharps destruction devices and mail-back programs. If none of these options are viable to you, MDEQ strongly encourages safe contained practices before disposing of used needles in the trash. Never throw loose sharps in the garbage or flush down the toilet. Place sharps in a thick-walled, sturdy plastic container such as one used for bleach, liquid soap, washing powder, antifreeze, fabric softener, paint thinner, etc. Rinse the container 3 times to make sure it is free of any residual product before using. Do not use soft plastic containers (soda or milk jugs), glass containers, or coffee cans. The container should have a tight-fitting, screw-type lid which can be used to seal the sharps when full. Label the container with the words "SHARPS" and "DO NOT RECYCLE". Seal the



container with heavy-duty tape before disposing. If you would like to bring your sealed container to a community sharps disposal program, there are drop-off locations in several cities and towns.

**Missouri** – Sharps must be properly packaged before they are placed with other household trash for collection and disposal. Individuals must place sharps in a sharps container with a tight-fitting, closeable lid and be leak-proof on the bottom and sides. If sharps containers are not available, another packaging option is to use a thick-walled plastic container, such as a laundry detergent bottle. Tape the container shut and place it in the household trash so that the container will not be inadvertently retrieved from the trash to be recycled. If you would like to bring your sealed container to a community sharps disposal program, there are drop-off locations in Buchanan County, Columbia County and Platte County.

**Montana** – The Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) recommends instead of placing sharps directly in the trash, consider one of these disposal methods: drop box or supervised collection sites, mail-back programs, syringe exchange programs and at-home needle destruction devices. If none of the above options are available in your area, you may put the used sharps into an empty puncture- and leak-proof container with a tight lid, like a liquid laundry detergent or bleach container. Mark or label the container with the word “SHARPS”. Don’t use a clear container and don’t fill the container too full. Add some household bleach to the container to disinfect the needles, seal the container with a tight-fitting lid and secure it with a heavy-duty tape, such as duct tape (to make sure it won’t come off). You may put the secured container into your regular garbage for transport to the local solid-waste landfill. However, the DEQ recommends you notify your local garbage hauler that you have sharps for disposal to determine if there are any additional handling requirements. There is a sharps disposal program in Great Falls.

**Nebraska** – The Department of Environment and Energy recommends the following guidelines for packaging, transporting, or disposing sharps in the home: place in a rigid or semi-rigid, puncture-resistant and leak-proof container; do not mark or label the container in such a way as to divulge the contents; tightly close or seal the container; and ensure the outside of the container is free from contamination. Put the container in the household trash – don’t recycle! If you would like to bring your sealed container to a community sharps disposal program, there is a drop-off location in Omaha, which serves residents of Douglas County and Sarpy County.

**Nevada** – Used needles may be safely disposed in the regular trash sent to a landfill. Place used needles in a red sharps container or a strong, plastic container. When the container is  $\frac{3}{4}$  full, put the lid on, seal it with duct tape, and label DO NOT RECYCLE. Put the plastic container in the household trash. Sharps should never be thrown loosely into the trash or toilet. If you would like to bring your sealed container to a community sharps disposal program, there are drop-off locations in Carson City, Las Vegas and Reno.

**New Hampshire** – Sharps may be disposed of with household trash, if they are enclosed inside a rigid, puncture-resistant container, such as a plastic bleach or laundry detergent bottle. Securely tape closed the screw-top of the container with heavy-duty tape, such as duct tape. Label the container “Medical Sharps Container – Not for Recycling”. If you would like to bring your sealed container to a community sharps disposal program, there are drop-off locations in several cities and towns.

**New Jersey** – To dispose of sharps, put used sharps in a strong, plastic container. When the container is  $\frac{3}{4}$  full, put the lid on, seal it with duct tape and label DO NOT RECYCLE. Put the plastic container in the household trash – don’t recycle! If you would like to bring your sealed container to a community sharps disposal program, there are drop-off locations at several area hospitals.

**New Mexico** – Used needles may be safely disposed in the regular trash sent to a landfill. Place used needles in a rigid-plastic container that has a lid (such as an empty laundry detergent bottle). Add a small amount of bleach. Place the lid on the container, seal the container with tape, and place it in the trash. Do NOT place used needles in recycling bins or trash bags. If you would like to bring your sealed container to a community sharps disposal program, there are drop-off locations at county public health departments throughout the state.

**New York** – Put used sharps in a strong, plastic container. When the container is  $\frac{3}{4}$  full, put the lid on, seal it with duct tape, and label DO NOT RECYCLE. Put the plastic container in the household trash. If you would like to bring your sealed container to a community sharps disposal program, all hospitals and nursing homes in the state (with the exception of federal facilities), are mandated by law to accept properly contained home-generated sharps. In addition, many pharmacies, health clinics, community-based organizations, mobile van programs, public transportation facilities, housing projects, police stations, waste transfer stations and other venues have become settings for safe sharps and offer syringe collection drop boxes (or “kiosks”) to help facilitate the safe collection of used

sharps. The Department of Health provides 3 directories that identify sharps collection sites in communities across the state.

**North Carolina** – Households that use sharps are urged to place them in hard-wall containers. When the container is  $\frac{3}{4}$  full, put the lid on, seal it with duct tape, and label DO NOT RECYCLE. Put the plastic container in the household trash. If you would like to bring your sealed container to a community sharps disposal program, there are drop-off locations in Buncombe, Cumberland, Durham, Henderson, New Hanover and Orange counties.

**North Dakota** – There are options for the proper disposal of sharps in the state, including collection programs, sharps mail-back programs and home needle destruction devices. Check with your local hospital, clinic or pharmacy to see if they have a program to take back your full sharps containers. Not all hospitals, clinics or pharmacies in North Dakota offer this service. You can contact a company to enter their sharps mail-back program, and then place your used sharps in special containers provided by the company and return the container by mail to them for proper disposal. This service usually requires a fee, which varies depending on the size of the container. For a list of these companies, search the internet using keywords "mail back medical waste". Several manufacturers offer products that allow you to destroy used needles at home. These devices sever, burn, or melt the needle rendering it safe for disposal in the trash. The prices of these devices vary according to product type and manufacturer. Check with your pharmacist or search the internet using keywords "sharps disposal devices." The last and least preferred option is to place a filled sharps container in the trash. Needles and syringes should be placed in heavy plastic containers for example, laundry detergent containers **not** 2-liter soda pop bottles. You can also obtain a commercial container specially designed to hold sharps for disposal in your household trash. The container should be labeled "Sharps". When full, the container should be taped shut and placed in your garbage. Do not recycle. If you would like to bring your sealed container to a community sharps disposal program, there are drop-off locations in Fargo, Grand Forks, Harvey, Jamestown, Mandan, Minot and West Fargo.

**Ohio** – Dispose of used sharps in a purchased sharps container or use a rigid, leak-proof, puncture-resistant container with a tight-fitting lid. Common household containers that can be used include detergent bottles, bleach bottles, 2-liter bottles, plastic juice containers and coffee cans (if the lid is securely taped to the can). Glass containers are not recommended for use as sharps containers because the glass may break and spill the contents. Plastic milk jugs make poor sharps containers because the plastic used in these containers is thin and sharps easily poke through. In addition, milk jugs do not always have

a tight-fitting lid. Label any container used to dispose of sharps with the word “SHARPS” on all sides of the container in big block letters. Labeling the container will convey the potential hazard inside. Do not put your homemade sharps container in the recycle bin. Other options for disposal include sharps mail-back programs, which are available for a fee. If you would like to bring your sealed container to a community sharps disposal program, there are drop-off locations in Franklin, Licking, Logan, Mahoning, Miami, Montgomery, Summit, Washington and Wood counties.

**Oklahoma** - The Department of Environmental Quality does not provide written recommendations for disposing of home-generated sharps. However, individuals are responsible for ensuring that their used sharps are stored in a way that does not cause a health hazard. Place used sharps in a strong, plastic container. When the container is  $\frac{3}{4}$  full, put the lid on, seal it with duct tape, and label DO NOT RECYCLE. Put the plastic container in the household trash. At this time, there are 3 community-sponsored sharps disposal programs in the state, which serve residents of Durant, Midwest City and Norman. A pilot collection program, providing free sharps disposal and sharps containers for residents, has been implemented in certain areas by the Product Stewardship Institute (PSI) and the Oklahoma Meds and Sharps Disposal Committee, with support from the Oklahoma Department of Environmental quality (ODEQ).

**Oregon** – Place sharps in leakproof, rigid, puncture-resistant red containers. When the container is  $\frac{3}{4}$  full, put the lid on, seal it with duct tape, and label DO NOT RECYCLE. DO NOT THROW IN THE TRASH. Sharps should not be placed with recycling. If you would like to bring your sealed, red container to a community sharps disposal program, there are drop-off locations in several counties. Call the program to confirm if there are any container requirements, disposal fees or residency restrictions.

**Pennsylvania** – Place all used sharps in an opaque puncture-resistant, hard plastic or metal container. An empty detergent bottle with a screw-on cap or an empty coffee can will do. It is recommended prior to disposal, to disinfect used sharps with a solution of 1 teaspoon of bleach in  $\frac{1}{2}$  gallon of water. Close the container with its original lid and secure with heavy duty tape. Place the tight sealed container in a paper bag and discard it with your household trash. If you would like to bring your sealed container to a community sharps disposal program, there are drop-off locations in these counties: Alleghany, Armstrong, Beaver, Bradford, Bucks, Clarion, Franklin and Indiana.

**Rhode Island** - Put sharps into a sharps container immediately after use. (Syringes with attached needles should be disposed of with the needle still attached. Do not try to

remove, bend, break, or recap the needle.). If you do not have a sharps container, put items in a puncture-proof plastic container and tape the lid closed. Do not use a glass container. Store the waste container safely away from children. Put the sealed container into the center of a full, preferably dark trash bag and throw it out with the regular trash. Never put any type of sharp container in the recycle bin. If you would like to bring your sealed container to a community sharps disposal program, the RI Resource Recovery Corporation accepts properly prepared home-generated sharps through the Eco-Depot program from residents. More information can be found online at: [rirrc.org/recycling-composting-disposal/hazardous-waste/household-hazardous-waste](http://rirrc.org/recycling-composting-disposal/hazardous-waste/household-hazardous-waste)

**South Carolina** - The Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) has developed the “Get the Point” program, a safe, simple and convenient way to dispose of sharps. Home-generated sharps should be disposed of in an empty bleach or detergent bottle. First, place the free, warning sticker on the bottle and place the needles inside the bottle. Once the bottle is about 3/4 full, the cap should be tightly secured. Then discard the bottle in the household trash. VERY IMPORTANT: Always remember to place the warning sticker on bottles! For FREE stickers, call 1-800-285-5257. To view and print a copy of the sticker, go to the following website: [scdhec.gov/environment/recycling-waste-reduction/disposing-needles](http://scdhec.gov/environment/recycling-waste-reduction/disposing-needles). At this time, there are no known community-sponsored sharps disposal programs in the state.

**South Dakota** – Household syringes and needles can be disposed in your garbage. It is highly recommended that the medical waste be rendered noninfectious, placed in a rigid container, and labeled appropriately. Residents can also utilize other options available to them like mail-back programs that provide a safe sharps container and pre-paid postage. If you would like to bring your sealed container to a community sharps disposal program, there are drop-off locations in Rapid City and Sioux Falls.

**Tennessee** - Needles and sharps should be placed inside a sturdy plastic container with a screw on lid (such as a laundry detergent or fabric softener bottle) and disposed of in your regular garbage. If you would like to bring your sealed container to a community sharps disposal program, the Department of Environment and Conservation sponsors seasonal household hazardous waste collection events that accept properly contained sharps from state residents.

**Texas** – Place needles and syringes in a hard plastic or metal container with a tightly secured lid (a laundry-detergent or bleach bottle can serve as a good needle-disposal container). Do not use a see-through container. Label the container “Syringes”, “Sharps”

or “Needles”. Keep the container out of the reach of children and pets. When the container is full, seal and reinforce its lid with heavy-duty tape. Don’t put the container in the recycling bin. Dispose of the sealed container in the household trash. If you would like to bring your sealed container to a community sharps disposal program, there are drop-off locations in these counties: El Paso, Harris, Hays and Midland.

**Utah** – Isolate sharps in leak-proof, rigid, puncture-resistant containers such as a plastic soft drink bottle, a plastic milk bottle, or a sharps container commercially available. When the container is full of sharps, the lid should be tightly secured and taped on. The sharps container may then be placed in the regular household waste container for curbside collection. Local health departments may have rules that differ from the state rules. If you would like to bring your sealed container to a community sharps disposal program, there are drop-off locations in these counties: Davis, Salt Lake, Summit and Utah.

**Vermont** – To be safe and legal, dispose of home-generated sharps, needles and syringes in this manner: Place sharps in an empty, rigid plastic container, such as a laundry detergent bottle. Tape the bottle’s cap shut with strong tape. Firmly attach a “Do Not Recycle” label to the bottle. You can call 1-802-828-1138 to request “Do Not Recycle” stickers for home-generated sharps or print sample labels from site: [dec.vermont.gov/sites/dec/files/wmp/SolidWaste/Documents/Sharps-container-label-example.pdf](http://dec.vermont.gov/sites/dec/files/wmp/SolidWaste/Documents/Sharps-container-label-example.pdf). If you would like to bring your sealed container to a community sharps disposal program, there are drop-off locations in several counties.

**Virginia** - To safely dispose of sharps, place in an FDA-cleared sharps container specifically designed for home use or use an empty, rigid or heavy-duty, opaque, plastic container such as detergent or bleach bottles. Do not place household sharps in glass containers, plastic soda bottles, milk jugs or aluminum cans. Seal with a tight-fitting lid or screw cap. Wrap heavy-duty tape around the lid of homemade sharps containers. Use permanent ink to print in large, legible text: “HOUSEHOLD SHARPS – DO NOT RECYCLE” or “HOME GENERATED SHARPS”. Place the sealed, labeled sharps containers in the regular trash. Household sharps must NEVER be recycled, placed loosely or directly into the trash, or flushed down the toilet. Mail-back programs for household sharps disposal may also be available, though disposal fees or vendor requirements may apply. If you would like to bring your sealed container to a community sharps disposal program, there are drop-off locations in these counties: Chesterfield, Fauquier, Henrico, Loudoun, Mathews, Prince William, Rockingham, Shenandoah and Warren. Check with your local healthcare provider, pharmacy, or locality for more information as there may be other options for safe disposal in your community.

**Washington** – Residents (except for residents of Seattle and Snohomish County) may place used sharps in a strong, plastic container – like a laundry detergent or bleach bottle – seal container with duct tape and label DO NOT RECYCLE. Place in the trash, not the recycling. For all other communities, the Washington Department of Ecology does not provide written recommendations for disposing of home-generated sharps. However, individuals are responsible for ensuring that their used sharps are stored in a way that does not cause a health hazard.

**West Virginia** – Place needles in a hard plastic or metal container with a screw on or tightly secured lid. A metal coffee can may be used if the plastic lid is reinforced and sealed with heavy-duty tape. Do not use glass or clear plastic containers, such as soda pop or water bottles. Make sure the container is child and animal proof. When the container is  $\frac{3}{4}$  full, add a sanitizing solution, made by one tablespoon household bleach (5.25%), to one pint of water, then seal the container. With a permanent marker, print on the outside of the container in a contrasting color, “NOT RECYCLABLE – TREATED SHARPS”. Place the sharps container in a plastic bag and seal it with tape to prevent container leakage. Discard the sharps container with other garbage.

**Wisconsin** – It is illegal to put needles and other sharp medical items in the trash, recycling or medication collection drop boxes. Most counties in the state have disposal programs. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) maintains a list of registered sharps collection stations. Call the program to confirm if there are any container requirements, disposal fees or residency restrictions. In addition, many healthcare providers accept sharps, but are not required to register with the DNR. To get medical sharps ready for disposal, clip the needle points with needle clippers, or recap or re-sheath discarded sharps to help prevent needle sticks. Place the sharps in hard-puncture-resistant containers with secure lids or caps. Acceptable containers include commercially available sharps containers or thick-walled plastic detergent or bleach bottles with screw caps. Unacceptable containers include coffee cans, plastic milk jugs, plastic bags, aluminum cans and soda bottles. Visibly label the sharps container with the words “biohazard”, “infectious waste” or “sharps” or with the bio-hazard emblem. If you put sharps in a container that would otherwise be recyclable, label it “Do not recycle”. When the container is full, sealed and labeled, store it out of reach of children and dispose of it properly at a sharps collection station or by using another method.

**Wyoming** – The Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality does not provide written recommendations for disposing of home-generated sharps. However, individuals are responsible for ensuring their used sharps are stored in a way that does not cause a health

hazard. To dispose of sharps, put used sharps in a strong, plastic container. When the container is  $\frac{3}{4}$  full, put the lid on, seal it with duct tape and label DO NOT RECYCLE. Put the plastic container in the household trash – don't recycle! If you would like to bring your sealed container to a community sharps disposal program, there are drop-off locations in Carbon Springs County, Hot Springs County, Park County, Sweetwater County and Teton County.

Territory:

**U.S. Virgin Islands** – Regulators do not provide written recommendations to syringe users for disposing of home-generated sharps. However, individuals who use sharps at home are responsible for ensuring that their used sharps are stored in a way that does not cause a health hazard. To dispose of sharps, put used sharps in a strong, plastic container. When the container is  $\frac{3}{4}$  full, put the lid on, seal it with duct tape and label DO NOT RECYCLE. Put the plastic container in the household trash – don't recycle! At this time, there are no known community-sponsored sharps disposal programs in the islands.

For additional information or the most up-to-date guidance, visit the website:  
[safeneedledisposal.org](http://safeneedledisposal.org)