
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

NHDES regulates the disposal of household generated sharps (see New Hampshire 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 NHDES website. Go to www.des.nh.gov, click on “A to Z List” and scroll down to “Sharps Disposal.”
4. The container is disposed of at a facility that is authorized to accept it.

Although placing household generated sharps in the regular trash is not prohibited when disposed of using the above provisions, 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.

An alternative is to use a **Container Exchange or Mail Back Program** that supplies empty containers for clients to fill 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 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.

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 NHDES Solid Waste Management Bureau at (603) 271-2925 or via email at solidwasteinfo@des.nh.gov, and talk to your pharmacist and health care provider.