

Household Hazardous Waste

Sharps Waste

The CIWMB is working to help develop a safe, convenient, and cost-effective infrastructure for the collection and proper disposal of home-generated sharps waste. Decreasing the number of sharps disposed in landfills will help prevent potential health risks to landfill and material recovery facility workers.

The CIWMB's [Waste Prevention Information Exchange](#) provides more information about how to appropriately manage other health care waste at home, and you may also want to consult the [Medical Waste Management Program](#) of the California Department of Public Health.

The Law

Beginning on September 1, 2008, State law ([Section 118286](#) of the California Health and Safety Code) makes it illegal to dispose of sharps waste in the trash or recycling containers, and requires that all sharps waste be transported to a collection center in an approved sharps container.

[Section 117671](#) of the California Health and Safety Code defines "home-generated sharps waste" as hypodermic needles, pen needles, intravenous needles, lancets, and other devices that are used to penetrate the skin for the delivery of medications derived from a household, including a multifamily residence or household.

Sharps Waste Disposal

The following are some of the disposal options available to you for disposal of sharps waste:

- **Pharmacies.** Some drug store chains take back their customers' needles, although large quantities might not be accepted.
- **Mail-Back Service.** A list of sharps waste mail-back services authorized for use in California is available from the [California Department Of Public Health \(CDPH\)](#).
- **Local Household Hazardous Waste Program.** Call your local household hazardous waste agency and ask if they collect needles (sharps) at their collection facilities or on household hazardous waste days. Some do, others do not. There are four places you can look for this information:
 - Look in the Government section of your local white pages for a household hazardous waste listing for your city or county.
 - Call 1-800-CLEANUP (1-800-253-2687), a service of [Earth 911](#).
 - Visit the [Earth 911.org](#) website.
 - See the [Local Enforcement Agency Directory](#) on this website.
 - **UPDATED** [Local Jurisdiction Sharps Collection Programs](#), revised September 2008 (Adobe PDF, 345 KB). A file showing a sampling of local jurisdictions' sharps collection programs and containing contacts, email addresses, program summaries, and outreach materials. This spreadsheet could help jurisdictions that don't have collection programs set up their own sharps collection program.
- **Hospital Take Back.** Hospitals might take back needles (sharps) from those patients who go to the hospital for regular outpatient services.
- **Trash.** Please keep in mind that all trash is handled by people both at recycling facilities and at landfills. These people could be stuck by needles or other sharps that poke through their protective clothing, including heavy gloves and boots. This could result in serious injury, including infection by pathogens either from the needle user, or by pathogens that contaminate a needle after it is disposed. After September 1, 2008, home-generated sharps can no longer be thrown in the trash or in recycling containers (see note above).

[Medical Waste Disposal Directory](#). If you are searching for facilities that collect sharps for disposal, this directory enables you to locate one that is near to where you live or work.

Sharps Containers

The California Department of Public Health Medical Waste Management Program is recommending the use of [sharps containers approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration \(FDA\)](#). After accessing the FDA website, type “sharps” in the search box. The container names will display alphabetically.

Stakeholder Involvement

- [Sharps Stakeholders Meetings](#): An initial stakeholders meeting took place on March 17, 2008, at the Cal/EPA building.

Surveys: Sharps surveys were conducted in 2007 to identify current barriers to the proper disposal of home-generated sharps waste. The information will be used to establish more effective collection programs. By participating, survey takers played a part in helping home sharps users find a more convenient and safe way to dispose of sharps. [Survey results](#) are now available.

Educational Materials

CIWMB developed a poster and brochure to educate persons on proper sharps disposal. These materials can be downloaded or obtained by emailing a request to jcropper@ciwmb.ca.gov.

- [Brochure](#): Provides more details on where to dispose of sharps, why sharps are dangerous, and how to find locations to properly dispose of sharps. (152 KB)

- [Mailer](#): This mail-back request form is available to have businesses sign up to become a sharps collection location. (3.3 MB)

[Poster](#): This 18- by 24-inch poster gives general information on where to dispose of sharps properly. (1.9 MB)

For More Information

Stay informed about the latest developments in CIWMB’s efforts to promote safe disposal of sharps waste.

- **Listserv**: To receive periodic information about sharps, subscribe to the [Sharps and Pharmaceuticals Listserv](#).
- **Contact**: Please contact [James Cropper](#) for questions or more information.

[Pharmaceutical Drug Waste](#) | [Medical Waste Disposal Directory](#)

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Used Oil & Household Hazardous Waste Program <http://www.ciwmb.ca.gov/HHW/>

Contact: UsedOilHHW@ciwmb.ca.gov (916) 341-6457

Other Sharps Mail Back Programs



Stericycle 1-800-355-8773

XMED 1-866-735-9709

Sharps Compliance 1-800-722-5657