



SAFE DISPOSAL OF SYRINGES AND SHARPS (HOME GENERATED)

Hypodermic needles, syringes, and other sharps potentially transmit diseases.

Containerize:

1. Syringes/needles and other sharps should be placed in a hard opaque plastic bottle or metal puncture resistant container (**no larger than 1 gal**) with a screw on cap such as a used bleach bottle.
2. When full, tape the cap or lid onto the container with duct tape. Write the word "Sharps" on the outside of the container.

Dispose:

Ask the pharmacy or supplier where the sharps were purchased if they will take back the sharps, drop them off at a collection point listed below or purchase a mail back container. **Beginning September 1, 2008, the California Health Safety Code Section 118286 prohibits the disposal of home generated sharps in the garbage.**

Home-Generated Sharps Collection Points (no charge):

Merced County Division of Environmental Health
777 W 22nd Street, Merced, CA
Hours: Monday – Friday 7:30-5:00

Merced County Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Facility
6040 N Highway 59 Merced, CA
Hours: Monday – Friday 9:00-4:00 Saturday 9:00-1:00

Other sites may be added in the future.

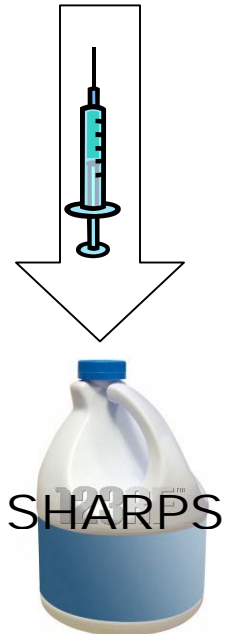
Definitions:

<p>Home Generation: Generated by an individual for personal use. Sharps: Are hypodermic needles, syringes and lancets. Also other sharp objects that can puncture or cut and potentially transmit disease should be treated as sharps.</p>
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- DO NOT** throw needles & syringes in the trash.
- DO NOT** break or bend needles.
- DO NOT** recap needles.
- DO NOT** use glass containers like a drink bottle.
- DO NOT** use containers that will be recycled or returned to a store like soda bottles.
- DO NOT** use clear plastic containers.

Note: Dairies may use 5 gal. rigid plastic containers with sealed tops and labeled "Sharps" and bring to the Hwy. 59 HHW site.

For more information contact Merced County Division of Environmental Health (209) 381-1100.



Use container no larger than 1 gallon



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 28, 2008

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NEW LAW REGULATES SHARPS WASTE AT HOME AND ON FARMS

MERCED – A new state law which takes effect on September 1, 2008 will regulate the disposal of sharps waste at homes and farms throughout the state. Sharps waste includes 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, farms or ranches, and includes sharps used for both humans and animals. 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. An approved sharps container may be purchased at a local drug store or a hard opaque plastic or metal container (no larger than 1 gallon) with a screw on cap may be used.

“With the introduction of this new state law, residents need to be aware of the proper procedures for disposing home-generated sharps waste,” commented Jeff Palsgaard, Director of the Merced County Division of Environmental Health. “Sharps can be disposed free of charge at the County’s household hazardous waste site, which is located at the Highway 59 landfill site. We want to ensure that County residents are aware of the new regulations, which improve safety for our waste management workers, as well as our citizens.”

The new regulation serves as an additional protection for waste management employees at recycling facilities and landfills. Staff at these facilities 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.

Additional information about the new regulations can be found online at the County website. Information on where residents can purchase and dispose of sharps containers, as well as other frequently asked questions will be posted online and are attached below. Residents with questions can also call the County Division of Environmental Health at 381-1100.

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For more information regarding Merced County, please visit our website at www.co.merced.ca.us

Home-Generated Sharps Disposal

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.

Effective September 1, 2008 no person shall knowingly place home-generated sharps waste in any of the following containers:

- 1) Any container used for the collection of solid waste, recyclable materials or greenwaste.
- 2) Any container used for the commercial collection of solid waste or recyclable materials from business establishments.
- 3) Any roll-off container used for the collection of solid waste, construction and demolition debris, greenwaste or other recyclable materials.

Home-generated sharps waste shall be transported only in an approved sharps container and disposed at the following locations:

- 1) A household hazardous waste facility.
- 2) A home-generated sharps consolidation point.
- 3) A medical waste generator's facility.
- 4) A State-approved sharps mail-back service.

All refuse is handled by people both at recycling facilities and at landfills. Staff at these facilities 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.

Frequently Asked Questions

1) What types of waste are considered home-generated sharps waste?

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, farms or ranches.

Note: This includes both human and animal sharps waste.

2) Where can I purchase sharps containers and what is the cost?

- Longs (\$5-6 per container)
- Walgreen (\$5-6 per container)
- GRP & Associates (800) 207-0976 www.sharpsdisposal.com (Cost 5 qt. \$3.74)

This list may not be complete and is not an endorsement of any specific store or product.

3) Where can I purchase mail-order return sharps containers and what is the cost?

Sharps waste may be mailed for disposal if utilizing one of the companies listed below which have been approved by the California Department of Public Health.

EnviroMed Safety & Compliance
(877) 340-2430 or www.enriromedinc.com

GRP & Associates
(800) 207-0976 or www.sharpsdisposal.com (Cost 1 gal \$60.95)

Medasend, Inc – Sharps mail-back service
(800) 200-3581 or info@medasend.com

Sharps Compliance, Inc. SCI Mail Sharps Disposal System
(800) 772-5657 or www.sharpsinc.com

Stericycle, Inc.—Sharps mail-back service (Cost 1 gal \$51.65)
(800) 355-8773, (800) 527-0666, or www.stericycle.com

WCM (Waste & Compliance Management, Inc.)
(866) 436-9264 or www.wcminc.net

This list may not be complete and is not an endorsement of any specific store or product.

4) Can other types of containers be used for storing sharps waste?

Yes. Containers may be placed in a hard opaque plastic or metal puncture resistant container (**no larger than 1 gal.**) with a screw on cap such as a used bleach bottle. When full, tape the cap or lid onto the container with duct tape. Write the word “Sharps” on the outside of the container.

5) Where can I dispose of the sharps waste containers locally if I am not using a sharps mailing service?

Ask the pharmacy where you purchased the sharps if the pharmacy will take back the sharps container. The following locations are approved consolidation points in Merced County:

Merced County Household Hazardous Waste Facility

6040 N. Hwy 59, Merced
Hours: Monday to Friday, 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Saturday 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
Free of Charge

Merced County Division of Environmental Health

777 W. 22nd St., Merced
Hours: Monday to Friday 7:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Free of Charge

Note: Additional consolidation points will be added in the future.

6) What are the requirements to become a home-generated sharps consolidation point?

The home-generated sharps consolidation point would need to be approved by the Division of Environmental Health and meet the following requirements:

- All sharps waste shall be placed in sharps containers.
- Sharps containers ready for disposal shall not be held for more than 7 days without the written approval of the Division of Environmental Health.

Note: The operator of a home-generated sharps consolidation point shall not be considered the generator of that waste.

7) Is there a difference in home-generated sharps and business-generated sharps disposal?

Yes. Businesses such as hospitals, doctors' offices, veterinary offices etc. are permitted and regulated under a different State law.

8) Are there special considerations for dairies which generate sharps?

Yes. Dairies should contact their sharps supplier to determine if they will take back the sharps. If the sharps supplier will not take back the sharps, the County Hwy. 59 Household Hazardous Waste facility, will accept the sharps. Because of the high volume of sharps on dairies, rigid, plastic 5 gallon containers with lids that are taped may be used. The containers must be labeled "Sharps".

9) How are the sharps disposed after collection?

The sharps are collected by a licensed company. The sharps waste is crushed, chopped, disinfected and land-filled.

10) Who do I contact if I have questions?

Merced County Division of Environmental Health at 381-1100