

DISPOSE OF HOUSEHOLD SHARPS THE SAFE WAY IN OKLAHOMA



Each year, U.S. households discard about 3 billion medical “sharps,” including disposable needles, syringes, and lancets. When trashed or flushed, they can injure or infect the public, hospitality workers, and sanitation personnel. They also cost taxpayers millions of dollars in maintenance problems when they jam recycling and waste management equipment.

Never put loose sharps in the trash, recycling, or toilet.

Here’s why, and what to do instead.

Best Options

Ask your health care provider if they can take back your sharps. If not, try the following:

Use city-wide programs if available: Currently in OK, only the cities of Durant (at-home pickup) and Midwest City (mail-back system) provide residential sharps disposal programs.

Drop off: Find a local program that collects sharps. Try a doctor's office, hospital, pharmacy, clinic, health department, community organization, law enforcement, fire station, medical waste facility, or municipal household hazardous waste facility.

Mail-back: Some companies will provide sharps mailback containers and disposal service for a fee.

Specific sites and programs can be found at
bit.ly/safesharps

Last Resort

Home destruction devices: A variety of products can clip, melt, or burn the sharp part, and separate the syringe or plunger (which can go in the trash).

Household Trash: If you cannot access any of the options above, you may dispose of sharps in a heavy-duty, rigid container in the trash. Keep this container away from children and pets. Follow these steps:

1. **Choose a container:** If available, use a rigid plastic container specially designed for sharps. Or, use a rigid, heavy-duty plastic container with a screw top (e.g., detergent bottle).
2. **Label:** Clearly label the container “DO NOT RECYCLE!”
3. **Fill:** Carefully place used sharps inside, needle side down, until the container is 3/4 full.
4. **Seal:** Screw on the cap and duct tape the top so it cannot be removed.
5. **Dispose:** Dispose in your household trash. Do not recycle.

Questions?

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