

# Be Sharp About Sharps

## For Further Information:

### The Coalition for Safe Community Needle Disposal

(800) 643-1643  
[www.safeneedledisposal.org](http://www.safeneedledisposal.org)

### U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

[www.epa.gov/osw/nonhaz/industrial/medical/med-govt.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/osw/nonhaz/industrial/medical/med-govt.pdf)

### Kenai Peninsula Borough Solid Waste Management

[www.borough.kenai.ak.us/swd-waste/swd-about](http://www.borough.kenai.ak.us/swd-waste/swd-about)

### U.S. Federal Drug Administration (FDA)

[www.fda.gov/MedicalDevices/ProductsandMedicalProcedures/HomeHealthandConsumer/ConsumerProducts/Sharps](http://www.fda.gov/MedicalDevices/ProductsandMedicalProcedures/HomeHealthandConsumer/ConsumerProducts/Sharps)

### Center for Disease Control and Prevention

[www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/bbp/disposal.html](http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/bbp/disposal.html)

### South Peninsula Hospital Diabetes Education 235-0311

## Syringe Exchange

A community-run syringe exchange program is offered at the SPH Training Center at 203 West Pioneer Avenue, Homer, the first and third Tuesdays of each month from 5-7pm. Additional information on this program can be obtained by emailing [homerexchange@gmail.com](mailto:homerexchange@gmail.com).

This brochure was designed to help our community in their efforts to safely dispose of home needles.



4300 Bartlett Street Homer, Alaska 99603  
[www.sphosp.org](http://www.sphosp.org) • 907-235-8101

## HANDLE WITH CARE Safe Options for Home Needle Disposal



## Important Information



Millions of people in the United States use over three billion needles, syringes, and lancets (also known as sharps) each year. Finding ways to safely dispose of these used sharps is an important public health priority.

Many of these self-injectors are unaware of safe disposal methods available to them and discard used needles in the trash or flush them down the toilet, posing a risk of injury or potential infection from diseases such as hepatitis B or C and HIV.



Waste handlers are at the highest risk, but family members, small children, pets, and wildlife can be injured as well.

Proper storage and disposal of needles, syringes, and lancets will protect members of your household and the general public from accidental injury and help us have a safe, clean environment.

## Disposal Options

Please use one of the safe disposal options detailed below.

### Safe Trash Disposal

Place sharps in a hard plastic bottle with a screw-on lid, such as a bleach or laundry detergent bottle. Do not use clear bottles. When bottle is  $\frac{3}{4}$  full, screw the lid on, tape it down with duct tape, and write: "CONTAINS SHARPS - DO NOT RECYCLE." Dispose with household trash, take to the local landfill.



### Mail-Back Sharps Programs

Mail-back programs are an option for those who wish to purchase special sharps containers. Search the internet using keywords "sharps mail back." All shipping materials, postage, and disposal fees are included in the purchase. Place your sharps in the special leak-proof containers and then mail to the company for disposal.

### At-Home Needle Destruction Devices

Several manufactures offer products that allow you to destroy used needles at home. These devices sever, burn, or melt the needles so you can put them in your trash. Check the internet for prices.

## Do's and Don'ts of Proper Trash Disposal

### Do...

- Put sharps in a hard, solid-color (not clear) plastic container with secure lid. If you do not have a special sharps container, use a plastic bottle that cannot be broken or punctured. Close the screw-on cap tightly. When the bottle reaches  $\frac{3}{4}$  full, put heavy duty duct tape around the lid and write "CONTAINS SHARPS - DO NOT RECYCLE" on the bottle.
- Put sharps into your container as soon as you use them. Keep the container closed and away from children and pets.
- Bring appropriate container with you when you travel. States have different laws regarding sharps disposal.

### Don't...

- Don't place uncontained sharps in the household trash.
- Don't put sharps in soda cans, milk cartons, clear plastic bottles, glass bottles, or containers that can be broken or punctured. Coffee cans are not safe options because the plastic lids come off easily.
- Don't flush used sharps down the toilet or drop them in sewer drains.
- Don't put sharp containers in recycle bins.
- Don't try to break, bend, remove or recap needles, especially someone else's.
- **Don't bring containers full of sharps to local clinics or pharmacies, or to the hospital outside of the designated times to receive sharps.**