



New York State Safe Sharps Collection Program

Disposal Options



Kiosk



Wall-Mounted unit



Personal Sharps Container

New York State Department of
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Safe Sharps Collection Program
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Safe disposal of used sharps, including hypodermic needles and syringes, is critically important for the health and safety of New Yorkers as well as for the State's environment. When these sharps come from places other than health care settings—such as individual residences and non-health-related facilities—there are specific considerations and challenges. Fortunately, there are also specific programs designed to address them.

Syringe exchange programs: Since 1992, the Commissioner of Health has authorized syringe exchange programs (SEPs) in New York to provide sterile syringes and remove used ones from circulation. Currently there are 17 of these programs operating at 46 sites. These SEPs exchange approximately 3 million syringes annually with their participants. Syringe exchange programs are also to accept household-generated sharps from non-SEP participants.

Residential sharps disposal program: Since 1993, hospitals and nursing homes have been required to accept used sharps originating from individuals as a free community service.

Expanded Syringe Access Program: The Expanded Syringe Access Program (ESAP) created in 2001, allows pharmacies, health care practitioners and health care facilities which have registered with the Health Department to sell or furnish syringes, in quantities of ten or less, to persons 18 years of age or older without a medical prescription. Provision of information on safe disposal is part of ESAP.

New York State Sharps Collection Program: To expand and promote sharps disposal options in the wake of ESAP, the State Health Department developed the New York State Safe Sharps Collection Program. Through this program, organizations and community-wide coalitions have created innovative disposal options which link syringe access with safe disposal. There is an application process for becoming part of this program and participating organizations are required to comply with state and local hazardous waste regulations.

Through the Sharps Collection Program, pharmacies, health clinics, community-based organizations, public transportation facilities, housing projects, police stations and other venues have become settings for safe sharps collection. The Department of Health has provided most of these sites with sharps collection kiosks and with wall-mounted sharps containers. It has also made small personal sharps containers, sometimes known as Fit-packs, available for use by individuals. There are currently more than 115 sites in 20 counties registered in the program. Seven of the Sharps Collection Programs use mobile van programs reaching an additional 20-30 sites. The vast majority of Sharps Collection Program sites are open to the general public, while 10 are limited to clients of a specific organization. To view a public list of these alternative collection sites please visit the NYSDOH website or go to:

http://www.nyhealth.gov/diseases/aids/harm_reduction/needles_syringes/sharps/docs/alternate_sites.pdf

The success of the Sharps Collection Program has been impressive. In 2006, approximately 12 tons of syringes and other sharps were collected. Other states have expressed interest in implementing statewide safe sharps collection programs and they are looking at the New York State Safe Sharps Collection Program for guidance.

To learn more about the NYS Safe Sharps Collection Program, visit the website at: http://www.nyhealth.gov/diseases/aids/harm_reduction/needles_syringes/sharps/directory_sharpscollection.htm