Sharps and Needle Handling

Find yourself with sharps or needles to review as exhibits for a case, or just happening upon them on your way to work or out on a walk for lunch? Review these tips below to limit any potential injury for yourself and your co-workers by following these safe handling tips and safe disposal methods.

DOs and DO NOTs of Sharps/Needling Handling and Disposal:

DOs:
- ✓ Do keep the object pointed away from yourself and other people at all times.
- ✓ Do keep your fingers away from the tip of the object.
- ✓ Do immediately place used needles and other sharps in a sharps disposal container to reduce the risk of needle sticks, cuts or punctures from loose sharps.
- ✓ Do make sure that if a household container (e.g. water or soda bottle) is used for disposal, it has the basic features of a good disposal container.

- ✗ Do not try to remove, bend, break, or recap needles used by another person. This can lead to accidental needle sticks, which may cause serious infections.
- ✗ Do not ask for a sharp item to be taken from you or put it on a desk or other surface for another person to pick up.
- ✗ Do not walk unnecessary distances with a sharp in hand.
- ✗ Do not dispose of loose needles, syringes, or sharps into the trash or recycling.
- ✗ Do not flush needles and other sharps down the toilet.

DO NOTs:

What Makes a Good Disposal Container?

Containers for sharps must be puncture-resistant. The sides and the bottom must be leak-proof. They must be appropriately labeled or color-coded red to warn everyone that the contents are hazardous. Containers for disposable sharps must be closable (that is, have a lid, flap, door, or other means of closing the container). The NM Environment Department, Solid Waste Bureau Chief recommends any household item if available, an empty fluid container that has a thick or heavy duty plastic casing, or a laundry detergent bottle works well, seal the container with tape, and label it as containing sharps so that it does not inadvertently end up in the recycling bin. _ONLY_ once the sharps container is properly labeled and sealed can you place this in the regular trash for further disposal.

How Do I place them in the Disposal Container?

Ensure you are wearing gloves if needed and keeping fingers away from the needle or sharp end of the object. When disposing of sharps in a container place the sharp end in first i.e. pointing it away from the body, drop the item in rather than push, do not place hands inside the container.

What Do I do if I find a Sharp or Needle?

Notify a supervisor or office manager immediately if the sharp is found within an LOPD office location. Supervisors and Office Managers if you find an uncovered sharp object outside of a disposal container, it is safe to pick it up only if you can grasp the non-sharp end. If you cannot, use tongs to pick it up and dispose of it as outlined above. If you need to report a large amount of needles or sharps review your local city's website for sharps disposal locations. If needed you can also use https://safeneedledisposal.org/states/new-mexico/#showTable. This is statewide list of sharp disposal locations, please note this is not an exhaustive list published by "Safeneedledispoal.org".

IF YOU CANNOT GET AN FDA-CLEARED SHARPS CONTAINER, FOLLOW THESE GUIDELINES:

Use an empty household container with these features:

- Stays upright
- Tight-fitting lid that cannot be punctured
- Made of heavy-duty plastic
- Does not leak

DO NOT USE
These containers can break or puncture easily.
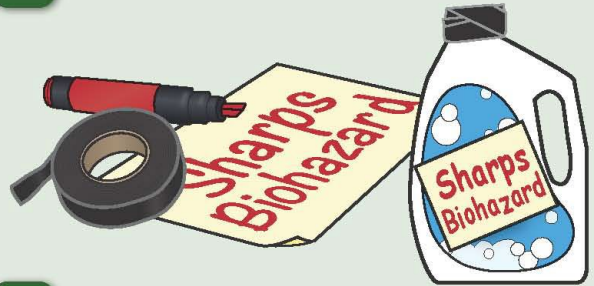
- Milk container
- Water bottle
- Glass container
- Soda can

Discarding a household container:

1 Close lid and tape shut. Label container.

2 Bring container to a sharps disposal program.

If you cannot find a disposal program, put container in center of full trash bag and discard in regular trash.*

DO NOT put sharps containers in RECYCLING!

* In some areas it is illegal to dispose of sharps in the trash. Please follow your community guidelines.

Print Name	Signature

LOPD District Office

Date: