

# How to Safely Dispose of **Household Sharps**

**In our region, household sharps and medical waste can be disposed of in your regular trash by following the guidelines in this brochure.**

Millions of people use needles, syringes, and lancets at home to care for their health. These needles, syringes, and lancets are called sharps.

Used household sharps must be stored safely and disposed of properly to protect people from diseases.

## **Safe Disposal of Used Sharps:**

- Protects children, pets, and workers who handle trash and recyclables from illness and injury.
- Prevents sharps from being re-used or shared, which can spread diseases.
- Protect the environment.

## **How to Store Your Used Sharps**

Here are the best ways to store used sharps until you can safely dispose of them:

### **DO...**

- Put used sharps (needles, syringes, lancets) in a sharps container. You can buy containers at your local drugstore. If you do not have a sharps container, use a plastic bottle that cannot be broken or punctured, such as a bleach bottle or laundry detergent bottle. Close the screw-on cap tightly. Put tape over the cap and write, "CONTAINS SHARPS" on the bottle.
- Put sharps into your container as soon as you use them. Keep the container closed and away from children and pets.
- After filling your sharps container, fill with dirt, cat litter, or sand to help prevent the container from rupturing.
- Bring your container with you when you travel.



## **DON'T...**

- Don't put loose used sharps or your used sharps container in with the recyclables.
- Don't put used sharps in soda cans, milk cartons, glass bottles, or containers that can be broken or punctured. Coffee cans are not safe because the plastic lids come off easily and may leak.



## **Household Medical Waste:**

- Household medical waste such as soiled bandages, dressings, gloves, and other soiled materials should be placed in a plastic bag and securely fastened before being placed in your garbage can.
- Please contact your local solid waste handler if you have questions about the disposal of your household sharps or other household medical waste.

## Disposal Tips for Commercial Health Care

Medical waste generated by a commercial health care business must be disposed of properly in Idaho. This type of waste may **NOT** go to a transfer station or construction demolition landfill in Region 2, North Central Idaho.

Commercial health care businesses must use a disposal service to pick up and properly dispose of their medical waste.

For further information on home-generated medical waste contact your local Health Department office or the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality's Pollution Prevention Program at 208-373-0502.



### Public Health - Idaho North Central District

**Nez Perce County**  
215 10th Street  
Lewiston, ID 83501  
(208) 799-3100

**Latah County**  
333 E. Palouse River Drive  
Moscow, ID 83843  
(208) 882-7506

**Clearwater County**  
105 115th Street  
Orofino, ID 83544  
(208) 476-7850

**Lewis County**  
132 North Hill Street  
Kamiah, ID 83536  
(208) 935-2124

**Idaho County**  
903 West Main Street  
Grangeville, ID 83530  
(208) 983-2842



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## Disposal of Sharps and Medical Waste Generated from Home

