

PROPER DISPOSAL OF SHARPS AND TEST STRIPS

Sharps are syringes, pen needles, lancets, or broken glass with blood, etc.

It is not safe to put used sharps directly in the trash

If you dispose of your used sharps loosely in the trash, you may put others, including your family, trash haulers, landfill employees, pets, and wild animals at risk of infection and physical injury from needle sticks and cuts. While you may know that you do not have an infectious disease, others outside your home will not know. If someone suffers from a needle stick injury, he or she may need to rush to the emergency room or a doctor's office for lab tests and treatments.

Steps for proper packaging and disposal of sharps

1. Place the sharps in a strong plastic or metal container with a screw-on or tightly secured lid. Containers like empty bleach bottles, liquid detergent bottles, or heavy plastic jugs work well because they are strong enough to prevent the sharps from poking through the container and they have lids that you can fasten securely. You may use a coffee can as long as you seal the lid with strong tape once the container is full. **NEVER USE A GLASS CONTAINER.**



2. Close the container with the appropriate lid and then seal the container with tape.
3. Make sure that the outside of the container is

not visibly contaminated.

4. Clearly label the sealed container with the word "Sharps" or "Biohazard Waste."
5. Place the sealed and labeled container in your regular trash.
 - DO NOT PUT CONTAINERS CONTAINING SHARPS IN WITH YOUR RECYCLABLES.
 - Keep the sharps container out of the reach of children and pets.
 - Never crush or compact filled sharps containers in any way.



If you have a full red biohazard sharps container from a commercial manufacturer, contact the manufacturer to see if you can return the container to them through a mail-back or drop off program. If you cannot return the container to the manufacturer, then you can dispose of the puncture resistant, labeled, and sealed container in your regular trash.

Sharps collection programs

Colorado law does not require households to use a mail-back program or medical waste disposal company to dispose of used sharps.

Proper disposal of used test strips

Put used test strips in a plastic bag that you can seal securely, such as a zip top sandwich bag. Then throw the sealed bag in your trash. You may also put used test strips in your sharps container if you dispose of the sharps container in your household trash.

For more information, contact:

Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment
Hazardous Materials and Waste Management Division
Customer Technical Assistance Line at (888) 569-1831 ext. 3320 toll-free