

Safe Handling and Disposal of Sharps



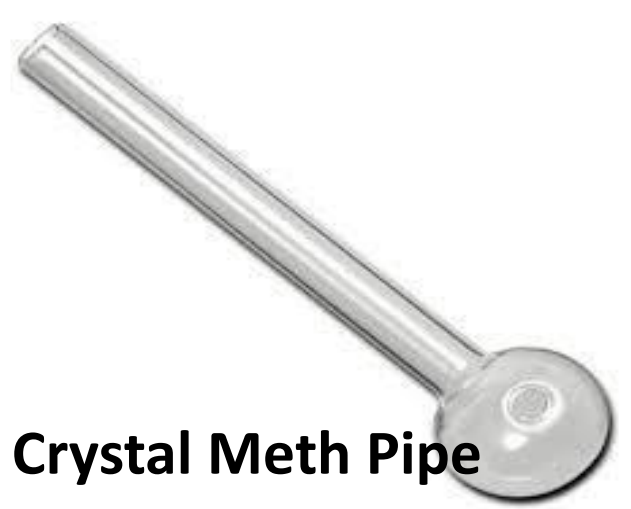
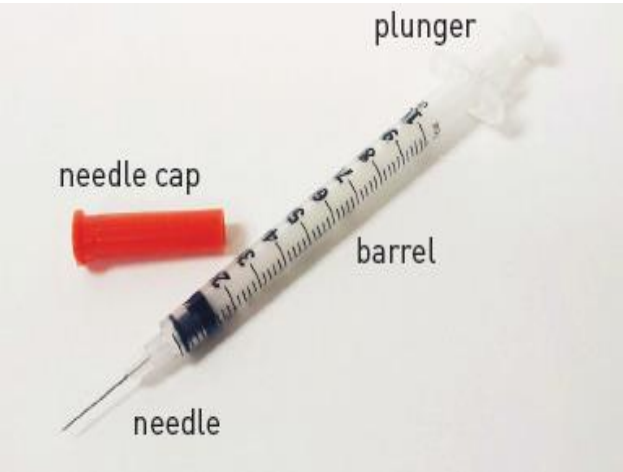
Adapted with permission from Grey Bruce Health Unit

What is a Sharp?

- A sharp is an item having corners, edges, or projections capable of cutting or piercing the skin:
 - Needles
 - Needles with syringes
 - Needles from vacutainers
 - Needles with attached tubing
 - Insulin pen
 - Blades (razors, scalpels, exacto, etc.)
 - Broken glass that has come into contact with blood or other body fluids



Drug Paraphernalia Should be Treated as Sharps



Improper Disposal of Sharps is a Community Concern

- People use sharps for a variety of reasons. Some medical conditions require people to use needles such as diabetes, cancer, or arthritis. People also use needles for non-medical injection drug use.
 - Improperly discarded sharps in public places is a challenge that many communities face.
 - A community approach is required to address this issue.
 - When needles are discarded improperly in a community, it is often a result of not having a place to properly dispose of them.
 - Most people will dispose of needles safely if safe choices are made available.
- (Bridgeman & LePage, 2017, p.3).

Improperly Discarded Sharps can Result in Sharps Injury

This can affect anyone but some people may be at higher risk:

- Maintenance and custodial staff, grounds staff (garbage and recycling removal)
- Accidental needle stick injuries can expose people to blood borne infections such as Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C and HIV; although the risk is low it is still important to be cautious

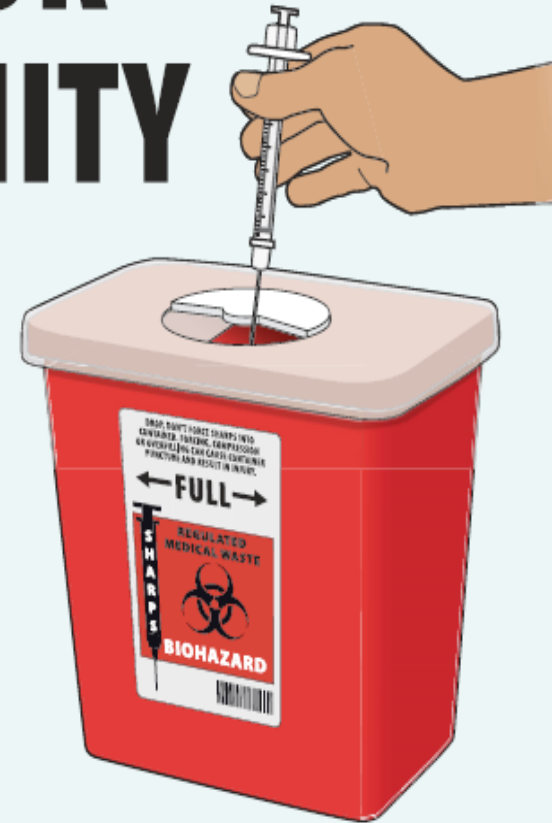
If you find improperly discarded sharps...

- **On private property:** Owner's responsibility and resources available from Public Health to support individuals to safely dispose of sharps
- **While working:** If trained/have equipment, following organizations procedures
- **Public Place:** Some police services and municipalities will respond; check with your local services

Sharps must be disposed of in sharps containers and managed as biohazardous waste.

**KEEP YOUR
COMMUNITY
SAFE**

**USE A
SHARPS
CONTAINER**



Used sharps are hazardous waste. When not discarded properly they can cut and infect others. Protect your community by always discarding your used sharps in a sharps disposal container. Free sharps containers may be available through your doctor, hospital, health insurance or medication supplier. You can also buy one from your pharmacist or online.

Disposal of Sharps

DOs	DON'Ts
Use PPE (personal protective equipment)	Handle sharps with your hands
Use sharps containers	Force sharps into containers
Prepare for disposal	Fill containers more than $\frac{3}{4}$ full
Participate in training	Empty sharps containers
Report unsafe environments or practices	Recap needles or break the tips off
Track found needles/sharps	Use hand or feet to compact garbage
Follow your workplace policy and procedure	Pick up more than one sharp at a time

What is PPE?

- Personal protective equipment, commonly referred to as "PPE", is equipment worn to minimize exposure to hazards that cause serious injuries and illnesses.

Recommended PPE for handling sharps:

- Puncture resistant or rubber gloves
- Tongs
- Closed toe footwear
- Biohazardous waste container or puncture proof container with a lid



Safe Sharp Disposal

- Follow your organizational policy and procedure for handling sharps
- Participate in training
- Track found sharps to identify if there are trends or locations that can support further policy development



Safe Sharps Disposal

- **Do Not:**

Throw loose sharps
in garbage



Put sharps in
recycling bin



Flush sharps
down toilet



Throw sharps in
bushes or parks




Steps to Safe Sharp Disposal

- Assemble required equipment:
 - Gloves
 - Tongs
 - A sharps container
- Put on closed toe shoes
- Bring equipment to the site of the found sharp
- Assess the site for health hazards

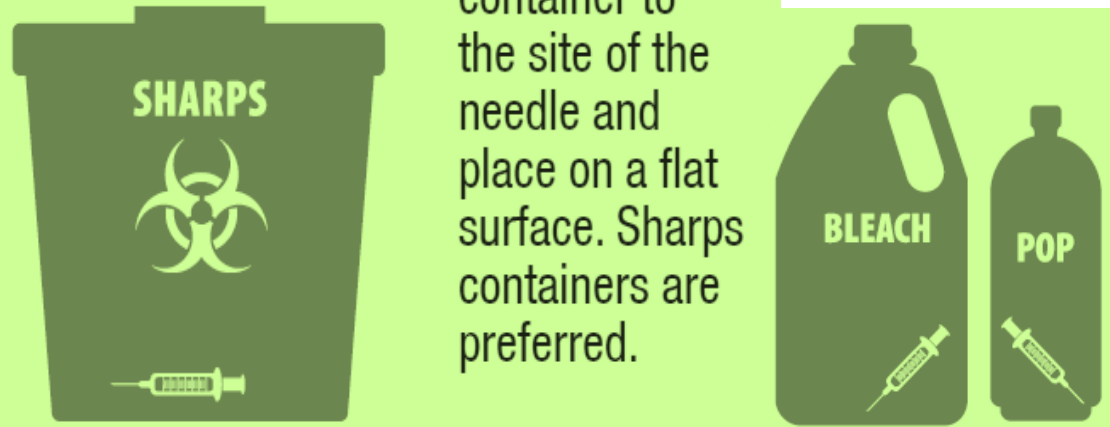
Steps to Safe Sharps Disposal

1



Put on gloves to protect yourself from fluid contamination (they won't protect against punctures or cuts).

2




Bring a puncture proof, sealable container to the site of the needle and place on a flat surface. Sharps containers are preferred.

*Ensure your container is within arm's reach of where you are working!

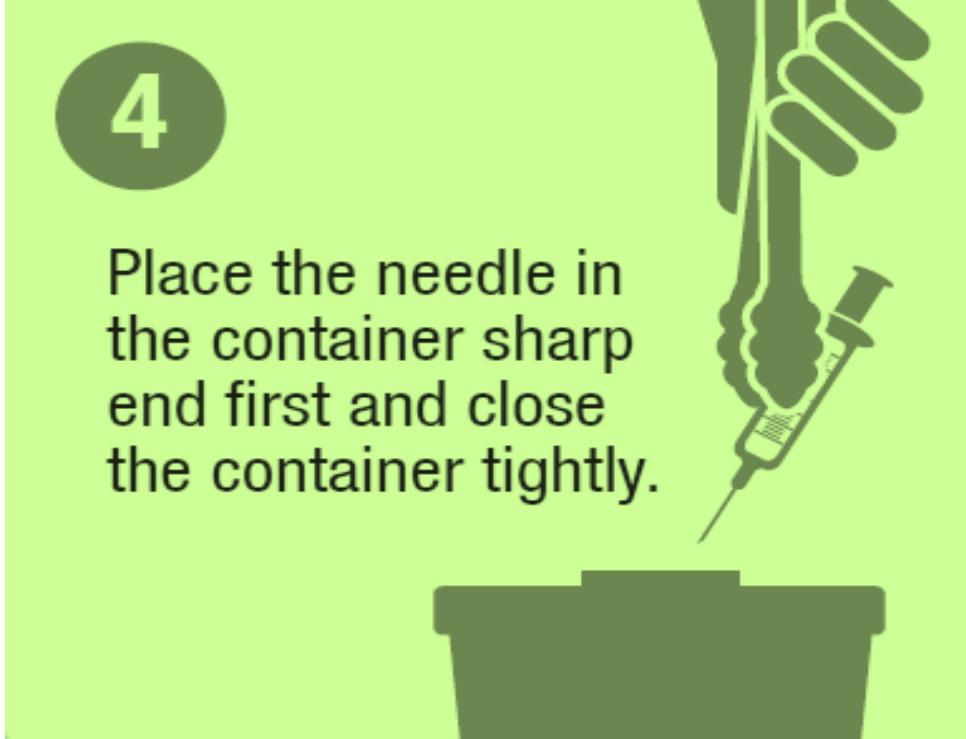
Steps to Safe Sharps Disposal

3



Pick up the needle with BBQ tongs or tweezers by the middle of the plastic tube with the sharp end facing down. If there are multiple needles, pick them up one at a time.

4



Place the needle in the container sharp end first and close the container tightly.

Steps to Safe Sharps Disposal



For disposal, bring the sharps container to CK Public Health, King St or call your local pharmacy.

Safe Sharps Disposal



[Safe Disposal of Needles - CK Public Health \(ckphu.com\)](http://ckphu.com)

I got poked by a needle. What do I do?

- Remain calm
- Allow the wound to bleed freely; do not squeeze the wound
- Wash the wound with soap and water; do not apply alcohol or bleach to the wound
- Apply a sterile, waterproof bandage
- Notify your supervisor/manager
- Seek immediate medical attention by going to your local emergency department

I FOUND A NEEDLE. NOW WHAT?

On Public Property:

(sidewalks, streets, parks, trails, alleys, facilities, etc.)



Call the Chatham-Kent Customer Service Department at 519-360-1998 to arrange for disposal.

On Private Property:

(home or business you own)



Follow the instructions below or call CK Public Health at 519-355-1071 for safe handling and disposal methods.

Steps for Safe Needle Disposal



Put on gloves (latex, garden or vinyl)
These will protect you from fluids, but not cuts or punctures

Pick up needle using tongs and place it (sharp end first) into a puncture proof, sealable container before closing tightly.



Clean the end of the tongs or tweezers with an alcohol swab before removing gloves.

Place gloves in trash and clean hands with warm water and soap.



Bring sealed containers to CK Public Health, Clinic Services - 177 King Street East, Chatham

DO NOT:

- Throw loose sharps in garbage
- Put sharps in recycling bin
- Flush sharps down toilet
- Throw sharps in bushes, parks or streets

Poked by a needle?

- Remain calm
- Allow the wound to bleed freely
- Wash the wound with soap and water
- Apply a clean bandage
- Go to your family doctor or emergency room right away

References

- Bridgeman, J., & LePage, R. (2017). *Safe Sharps Disposal Toolkit. A Community Response to a Community Issue*. Retrieved from <https://www.interiorhealth.ca/sites/Partners/HarmReduction/Documents/Safe%20Sharps%20Disposal%20Toolkit.pdf>
- Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services. (2017). *Community Safety and Well-being Planning Framework: A Shared Commitment in Ontario*. Retrieved from <https://www.mcscs.jus.gov.on.ca/sites/default/files/content/mcscs/docs/Booklet%203%20A%20Shared%20Commitment%20Final%20Dec%202018.pdf>
- Sudbury and District Health Unit. (2017). *Safe needle disposal*. Retrieved from https://www.phsd.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Safe_Needle_Disposal_Toolkit_2017.pdf
- Toronto Public Health. (2018). *Needle Disposal: Guidance for Policies and Procedures*. Retrieved from <https://www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/8dbc-Needle-Disposal-Guidance.pdf>