



Physicians' Bulletin

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“Sharps Law” Senate Bill 1305 (Figueroa) The Medical Waste Management Act

Background on the SB 1305 (Figueroa) - “The Medical Waste Management Act”

As of September 1, 2008, the Medical Waste Management Act (SB 1305) requires home-generated (HG) sharps waste to be transported in approved sharps containers, or other containers approved by the local enforcement agencies and to be managed only at state-approved locations. California residents will no longer be allowed to dispose of home-generated (HG) sharps (hypodermic needles, pen needles, lancets, blades, or other devices used to penetrate the skin for delivery of medications or to conduct blood test) waste in solid waste and recycling containers. The legislation was enacted to primarily protect sanitation and waste removal workers. The new law prohibits the previous practice of disposing home-generated (HG) sharps in rigid containers with lids or caps, such as coffee cans and bleach bottles, into trash bins.

To view this new legislation in its entirety go to:
http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/pub/05-06/bill/sen/sb_1301-1350/sb_1305_bill_20060712_chaptered.html

Role of Public Agencies

There is no provision in the bill for increased funding, personnel, or infrastructure to implement the law. Rather, the bill encourages state agencies, local governments, and industry groups to work cooperatively to publicize sites that are authorized to accept HG sharps waste and to implement convenient mail-back programs that use containers approved by the United States Postal Service.

The County of San Diego, Department of Environmental Health, Hazardous Materials Division (DEH – HMD) is the designated local enforcement agency, not a provider of programs or services. DEH-HMD is working with

other agencies, health care providers and businesses to develop effective and convenient take back programs for HG sharps waste. In addition, the County of San Diego Household Hazardous Waste program implemented placing HG sharps disposal kiosks located outside Sheriff Substations in the unincorporated areas. The County has obtained funding to operate these for at least one year.

Safe Transport of Sharps by Patients

The new law allows the transport of HG sharps in approved sharps containers to drop-off collection sites such as healthcare providers, pharmacies, approved sharps consolidation kiosks or Permanent Household Hazardous Waste Collection Facilities (PHHWCF). HG sharps transport containers should be rigid, puncture resistant, and when sealed can not be re-opened easily such as:

- Red containers designed for sharps
- Coffee cans with secure lids (hard plastic or metal)
- Bleach detergent bottles with caps
- Hard plastic condiment containers with caps

These containers are to be taped shut and labeled as “SHARPS.”

Disposal Options for Your Patients

1. PHHWCF

Hazardous waste programs vary from city to city so instruct your patients to call in advance. A list of PHHWCFs that accept sharps waste is attached. Go to the DEH-HMD Community Health Division website: www.sdcounty.ca.gov/deh/hazmat/chd_hhw_sharps.html to get an updated list. On the “Safe disposal of Home Sharps” page, click on “hazardous waste facilities” under the heading “Put Sharps in its Place!”.

2. Kiosks

Patients living in unincorporated areas can drop off HG sharps in closed, rigid containers no larger than 2 liters (1/2 gallon) at kiosks located outside Sheriff substations. Kiosks are currently available in Borrego Springs, Fallbrook, Julian and Valley Center. An updated list of locations is available at:

www.sdcountry.ca.gov/deh/hazmat/hhw.html. On the “Household Hazardous Waste” page, click on “safe disposal of home sharps” and a list of locations will be displayed under the heading “Put Sharps in its Place”. A brochure is also available at this site.

3. “Mail-back” service (fees apply)

A list of mail-back services approved by the California Department of Health Services is attached. For an updated listing, patients should call (916) 449-5671 or visit the California Department of Public Health-Medical Waste Management website:

<http://www.cdph.ca.gov/certlic/medicalwaste/Documents/MedicalWaste/mailback.pdf>, or go to:

www.cdph.ca.gov. This opens the California Department of Public Health home page. On the “search” field at the top of the page, type the words “waste mail-back”, click on radio-button “this site only”, then click “sharps mail-back list” from the list and the mail-back list will display.

Some local drugstores or family clinics may also sell approved pre-paid mail-back sharps containers.

4. Medical waste generator facilities

Clinics, doctor’s offices, hospitals, etc. are considered medical waste generator facilities. Some of these facilities may already have programs/services in place to accept HG sharps from their patients.

If you would like to accept HG sharps from your patients and would like to get information or have any other questions contact:

Maryam Sedghi
Supervising Environmental Health Specialist
Department of Environmental Health
Phone: (760) 940-2858
Email: Maryam.Sedghi@sdcounty.ca.gov

Educate and Increase Awareness

Educate your patients. Millions of needles are used outside the health care system and most end up in the trash, recycling containers, or are flushed down toilets, posing serious health risks to children, workers and the general public. The new law is a step in the right direction to protect the public and the environment from the threat of blood-borne pathogens.

The *Physicians' Bulletin* is published on an as-needed basis by the County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency to provide updated information on health issues of concern to San Diego County's medical community.

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San Diego County Household Hazardous Waste Information Contact List



Contact your City's program for local disposal information:

| City | Telephone Number | Website |
|----------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Carlsbad | (760) 602-4646 | www.ci.carlsbad.ca.us/waste/index.html |
| Chula vista | (619) 691-5122 | www.chulavistaca.gov/clean |
| Coronado | (619) 522-7380 | www.coronado.ca.us/egov/apps/services/index.egov?path=details&action=i&id=46 |
| Del Mar | (800) 444-4244 | www.delmar.ca.us/business/GeneralInformation?FAQ/TrashServiceFAQ.html |
| El Cajon | (619) 596-5100 | www.ci.el-cajon.ca.us/dept/works/recycling.html#house_hazard |
| Encinitas | (800) 444-4244 | www.ci.encinitas.ca.us/Resident/HomeAP/HazardousWWC |
| Escondido | (760) 745-3203 | www.escondidodisposal.com/res-hazard-waste.html |
| Imperial Beach | (619) 424-4095 | www.edcodisposal.com/services/imperialbeach/hazardous.html |
| La Mesa | (619) 287-5696 ext. 4270 | www.cityoflamesa.com/hhw |
| Lemon Grove | (619) 287-5696 ext. 4270 | www.ci.lemon-grove.ca.us/recycle |
| National City | (619) 691-5122 | www.edcodisposal.com/services/nationalcity/hazardous.html |
| Oceanside | (760) 435-3900 | www.ci.oceanside.ca.us/Datarelation.aspx?Content=131 |
| Poway | (800) 444-4244 | www.poway.org/Index.aspx?page=284 |
| San Diego | (858) 694-7000 | www.sandiego.gov/environmental-services/ep/hazardous.shtml |
| San Marcos | (800) 444-4244 | www.ci.san-marcos.ca.us/departments.asp?id=2800 |
| Santee | (619) 258-4100 ext. 128 | www.ci.santee.ca.us/index.aspx?page=113 |
| Solana Beach | (800) 444-4424 | www.ci.solana-beach.ca.us/contentpage.asp?ContentID=213 |
| Vista | (800) 444-4424 | www.cityofvista.com/departments/pubworks/HouseholdHazardousWaste.cfm |
| Unincorporated Areas | (877) 713-2784 | www.sdcounty.ca.gov/deh/hazmat/hhw.html |

Available at:

http://www.sdcounty.ca.gov/deh/hazmat/pdf/chd_hhw_contacts.pdf

Accessed March 13, 2009

MAIL-BACK SERVICES
APPROVED BY THE CALIFORNIA
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH
(Revised August 2008)

- EnviroMed Safety & Compliance
www.enviromedinc.com (877) 340-2430
- XMED Disposal, Inc.
www.xmeddisposal.com (866) 735-9709
- GRP & Associates
www.sharpsdisposal.com (800) 207-0976
- Medasend, Inc.
www.medasend.com/ (800) 200-3581
- Sharps Compliance, Inc.
www.sharpsinc.com/ (800) 772-5657
- Stericycle, Inc.
http://www.stericycle.com/mailback_programs/sharps.html
(800) 355-8773 or (800) 527-0666
- WCM (Waste & Compliance Management, Inc.)
Home Sharps Disposal
www.homesharpsdisposal.com (877) 436-5480

Note: Some medical waste transporters serve as distributors of mail-back kits—consult the Program's list of medical waste transporters. Also, many medical supply companies as well as solid waste pickup services offer mail-back containers. Before purchasing, verify that the product offered is on the above list.

- ▶ For additional information on requirements for use of these mail-back services, contact your local health or environmental health agency, or the State Department of Public Health, Medical Waste Management Program, at (916) 449-5671.

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