

# Options for Proper Sharps Disposal

## Drop-off Collection Sites

Some communities offer collection sites that accept sharps, often for free. These collection sites may be at local hospitals, doctors' offices, health clinics, police and fire departments, or health departments. Don't just leave your needles at one of these places, make sure the site accepts them and be sure to transport needles in an approved and sealed container.

## Household Hazardous Wastes Collection Centers

Many communities have a disposal site already set up that accepts household hazardous wastes items like used oil, batteries, and paint. In some locations, these centers also accept used needles. Two options, listed below, are available to Morongo Tribal Members and Morongo Residents.

## Morongo Environmental Protection Department Household Hazardous Wastes Collection Program

<http://www.morongonation.org/content/environmental-protection-department>



The EPD maintains a permanent collection facility for household hazardous wastes located adjacent to the Public Works facility at 47350 Foothill Road, Banning. The program accepts all household hazardous wastes including paint, used oil, fluorescent lamps, batteries, herbicides, pesticides, aerosol cans, household cleaners, and now also accepts household sharps collected in hard sided, approved containers. Materials can be dropped off at the quarterly drop-off days or by scheduling a drop-off time with the EPD by calling 951-755-5128. The collection program is open to all Morongo Tribal Members and all residents of the Morongo Reservation.

## Riverside County Household Hazardous Wastes Program

[www.rcwaste.org/Waste-Guide/sharps](http://www.rcwaste.org/Waste-Guide/sharps)

Riverside County has several permanent collection sites as well as temporary collection sites throughout Riverside County for household hazardous wastes. Sharps wastes may be brought to these collection facilities as long as it is in an approved hard sided container and labeled with a "BIOHAZARD" sticker. The events are open to all Riverside County Residents. For an updated schedule and for printable biohazard labels, please visit their website or call 1-800-304-2226.

## Morongo Environmental Protection Department



# A Guide to Syringe Disposal

**Protect Yourself,  
Protect Others,  
Safe Options  
for Home Needle  
Disposal**



**Morongo Environmental Protection  
Pollution Prevention Program**

**951-755-5128**

**epd@morongo-nsn.gov**

## Disposing of Your Syringes and Sharps

It is illegal to dispose of sharps (hypodermic needles, pen needles, intravenous needles, and lancets) in the trash, recycling bins, or composting bins.

All sharps should be treated as if they carry a disease. That means that if someone gets stuck with a needle, they could get infected with a disease that may be on the needle. Therefore, they would have to get extensive medical tests and worry about whether they may have caught a harmful disease.

You have the power to prevent a situation like this simply by safely disposing of used sharps. Do not place others at risk when safe alternatives are available!

## Why Are Needles Dangerous?

Sharps can injure people; can spread germs and diseases such as HIV and hepatitis; can damage recycling equipment; and require people to be tested for years for HIV and hepatitis, if they are stuck.

Sharps pose potential health risks to anyone responsible for collecting and handling trash and recyclables, including your family.

### To avoid needle sticks at home and protect garbage and recycling workers, don't do the following:

- **DON'T** throw used needles or sharps in any garbage or recycling bin.
- **DON'T** flush needles down the toilet.
- **DON'T** put needles in soft sided containers such as plastic bags, paper bags, or cardboard boxes.
- **DON'T** handle someone else's sharps.
- **DON'T** overfill sharps collection containers.
- **DON'T** place non- sharps items in your sharps container such as pills, wound dressings, glass, thermometers, etc.

### To properly and legally dispose of needles, do the following:

- **DO** use an approved disposal container.
- **DO** place a secure lid on the sharps container.
- **DO** find a collection center for proper disposal.
- **DO** be prepared for safe needle disposal when traveling.

## Properly Disposing of Needles

### Safe Packaging Options

The safest and recommended method to package your sharps is in an approved red sharps container. This sharps container is puncture-resistant and once sealed, cannot spill. This container is considered full when it has been filled to three quarters of its capacity. At this point, the container should be permanently sealed and returned to a disposal location as soon as possible. At that time, a new container should be obtained.



Riverside County residents can also place sharps in a hard sided plastic container, such as bleach or laundry detergent bottles, with a secure lid. Do not use a container that held food product. Place a label on the container that identifies "BIOHAZARD—SHARPS". Once the

container is three quarters full, secure the lid with duct tape and bring the container to a disposal location as soon as possible.



### Morongo Environmental Protection Department Assistance

The Morongo Environmental Protection Department (EPD) Pollution Prevention Program can assist in the support of safe, convenient, and cost-effective collection and disposal of home-generated sharps waste. The EPD has 1 quart, red sharps collection containers to distribute to the Morongo Community to help with collecting home-generated sharps (*pictured on the top right*).

If you need a sharps collection container, please stop by the EPD offices or call to request a container. We respect your privacy and will never ask for nor record any of your personal information.

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