

Safe Sharps Disposal for Households

Each year, an estimated 8 million people across the country use over 3 billion needles, syringes, lancets, and auto-injectors (collectively known as “sharps”) for at-home medical care. Due to the health and safety risks involved, proper disposal of these items is crucial to prevent:



- Needle stick injuries to waste workers and the public
- Potential transmission of serious diseases like HIV and hepatitis, and
- Contamination of the recycling stream and environmental risk.

California law requires that residents properly dispose of sharps in **FDA-approved, sealed, containers** and then either take them to approved drop-off sites or arrange a mail-back service. Fortunately, a multitude of safe, convenient disposal options are available to residents in Alameda County. Follow these steps for safe disposal of your sharps:

1. Place in Approved Container

- Place sharps in an FDA-approved disposal container immediately after use, making sure the container is not overly full.
- These containers are available at most chain pharmacies and drugstores.
- Containers can also be mailed to your home for free through services like MedProject via their [online request form](#).



2. Choose a Disposal Option

a) Drop-off Locations:

- Drop off at many pharmacies, drugstores, or police stations. Use [RE:Source](#) or [MED-Project](#) to find a location near you.
- Most locations offer self-serve drop-off kiosks. Ensure containers are FDA-approved and no larger than one gallon.
- You may also take your sharps containers to an [Alameda County Household Hazardous Waste](#) facility along with your batteries, paints, electronics, and other accepted items.



b) Mail-back Services:

MED-Project offers free mail-back services for all household sharps. You can order containers and shipping materials at the [MED-Project website](#).

Many pharmaceutical companies also offer free take-back programs for their own products; check with your provider for options.

Remember:

Never place loose sharps in the trash, recycling bins, or flush them down the toilet. Always use proper containers and disposal methods to protect your household, your community, and the environment.

Visit [RE:Source](#) for additional information about the proper disposal of medical waste including [sharps](#) and [medications](#).