INFORMATIONAL BULLETIN NO. 27-06-EPO

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND OVERSIGHT DIVISION

DISPOSAL OF USED NEEDLES AND SYRINGES AT HOME: HANDLE WITH CARE

Background: People with diabetes and other medical conditions must use syringes, needles and lancets every day to control their conditions and stay healthy. Also, individuals who own pets or reside on farms or ranches vaccinate and treat their animals to keep them free from illness. After the syringes, needles and lancets (sharps) are used they need to be disposed of properly. Improper disposal of used sharps can injure children, sanitation workers, and pets through accidental "sticks." These sharps can be contaminated with hepatitis, HIV and other infectious diseases. The spread of these diseases can be lessened by ensuring that the other sharps do not end up in places like streets, parks or playgrounds.

Method of Proper Disposal: Beginning on September 1, 2008, state law (Section 118286 of the California Health and Safety Code) made it illegal to dispose of home-generated sharps waste in trash or recycling containers. Residents should dispose of syringes, needles and lancets (sharps) at one of the Riverside County Temporary Household Hazardous Waste Collection events or Permanent Household Hazardous Waste Collection Facilities. These services are available to Riverside County residents only. Residents should place sharps in a labeled rigid-plastic bio-hazardous container. Residents can use any rigid container with a tight fitting lid but the container must be labeled with a bio-hazardous sharps container label. (Instructions for labeling containers and obtaining free labels for containers are available at: http://www.rivcowm.org/opencms/hhw/index.html#Sharps. Residents can also purchase pre-labeled sharps containers at most pharmacies.) For the current Household Hazardous Waste collection event and facility operating time schedule, go to the Riverside County Waste Management Department website at: http://www.rivcowm.org/opencms/hhw/index.html .

Sharps collection safety tips:

- Do not use glass containers to collect sharps (they can break.)
- Do not put sharps containers in your trash or recycling bin.
- Do not throw loose needles or lancets into the trash or recycling bin.
- Do not flush needles or lancets down the toilet.

If you have any questions regarding the disposal of home generated syringes and needles, please contact Riverside County Waste management Department at (951) 486-3200 or visit: http://www.rivcowm.org/opencms/hhw/index.html.

*Document available in an alternate format upon request.