

Safe Syringe Disposal

What is safe syringe disposal?

Many people in Washington use syringes for a variety of medical and non-medical reasons. To prevent accidental needlestick injuries, it is important to follow local laws about proper syringe disposal. Syringe service programs (SSPs) play a critical role in supporting people who inject drugs with correct syringe disposal.



Laws about safe syringe disposal vary by city and county. Not knowing how or where to dispose safely, or lack of safe disposal facilities, like SSPs, contributes to unsafe disposal.



People who use syringes to inject drugs may fear arrest for possession of used syringes. Including provisions for safe disposal in public policy is needed to encourage safe disposal.



People who safely acquire sterile syringes are more likely to safely dispose of used syringes. SSPs provide sterile syringes to people who inject drugs to protect their health. They also provide safe disposal education.



Community programs, like conveniently located and well maintained syringe drop boxes, have been shown to decrease unsafe syringe disposal. SSPs can sometimes partner with communities to maintain community disposal boxes.



Issues like homelessness and stigma are major factors that contribute to used syringes and other litter being left unsafely in public spaces. SSPs provide referrals, counseling, and other support to individuals who face these challenges.



There is lots of information about safe syringe disposal online. One helpful website is [SafeNeedleDisposal.org](https://www.safe-needle-disposal.org) — this site provides information about local syringe disposal laws, tips for safe disposal, and other resources.