

# SAFE NEEDLE AND SYRINGE DISPOSAL

## What Are Needles and Syringes Used For?

People use needles, syringes and lancets, also called sharps, to treat all sorts of medical conditions at home, including diabetes, allergies, cancer and others. Sharps may also be associated with illegal drug use. Safely disposing of sharps protects residents, sanitation workers and the environment, but more and more frequently they are found improperly disposed of.



## What Should I Do If I Find a Needle?

You can report large amounts of discarded sharps by calling 311, or for small amounts dispose of as outlined here

### Follow These Steps for Safe and Proper Disposal

- ✓ Put on gloves and place sharps container on a stable surface near the needle
- ✓ Pick up the needle with grabbers/tongs/pliers or tweezers, keeping the needle tip pointed away from you
- ✓ Put the needle into a sharps container, bleach or laundry detergent container or plastic peanut butter jar
- ✓ Tightly seal the container using tape to secure the top. Do not fill the container more than 2/3 full
- ✓ Label container "Sharps - Do Not Recycle" with a waterproof marker
- ✓ Keep container away from children and place in regular household trash cart
- ✓ Wash hands with soap and water

## Equipment You Will Need

Gloves - leather utility or vinyl  
Grabbers, tongs, pliers or tweezers  
Sharps container or other rigid plastic container  
Tape  
Waterproof marker

NEVER handle needles with bare hands - assume they are contaminated

NEVER attempt to snap, remove or bend needles, or put the cap back on

NEVER place sharps in a glass or light plastic container or a milk carton that could break or allow needles to poke through

NEVER allow children to handle needles

## For More Information

To learn more about proper disposal of larger quantities of sharps or to find out what the City of Albuquerque is doing about needles in the community, visit us on the web:

[www.cabq.gov/environmentalhealth/sharps-disposal](http://www.cabq.gov/environmentalhealth/sharps-disposal)