

# All About Syringe Disposal



Everything you wanted to know about cleaning up our neighborhoods.

## I came across a discarded syringe on the street, is there a safe way to pick it up?

Yes. There are safe ways to dispose of syringes you find on the ground. Sharing injection drug equipment can transmit infections, but there is little risk to someone who is accidentally poked or scratched by a discarded syringe.

## How do I safely dispose of a syringe?

You can download a step-by-step guide on how to safely pick up and dispose of syringes by visiting [multco.us/syringe-disposal](https://multco.us/syringe-disposal)

### Step 1: Pick it up

Some people use a tissue or napkin to pick up a discarded syringe. Especially if it's just one syringe.

Other people feel more comfortable wearing gloves, like gardening or kitchen gloves. Some people like to use tongs, pliers or a trash grabber. That's a good idea for anyone who is going to pick up a lot of syringes or who is going on a community clean-up.

### Step 2: Drop it in

- Use a hard plastic container, such a 20-ounce water or juice bottle with a lid.
- Set the container on the ground
- Drop the syringes in, one at a time, needle point down.

### Step 3: Seal it up

Close the container tight.

If you have a piece of tape you can seal the top.

If you have a pen, you can write on the outside, "**SHARPS. DO NOT RECYCLE.**"

### Step 4: Drop it off

It's against the law to throw syringes in the garbage, even if they are in a secure plastic container. Instead, drop the container in a nearby sharps box or take it to a Metro Household Hazardous Waste Facility:

- The Healthy Streets bin on the west side Waterfront Esplanade, under the Burnside Bridge
- The sharps box slot on the side of the storage container under the Steel Bridge
- Metro Central at 6161 NW 61st Ave, Portland (Metro only accepts sharps containers)
- Metro South at 2001 Washington St, Oregon City (Metro only accepts sharps containers)

For more disposal options, or if you have questions about medical waste disposal, or find an **illegal dump** on public property, **contact Metro** at 503-234-3000.

If you find discarded syringes in Portland's city center and don't feel comfortable picking it up, call **Downtown Clean & Safe** at 503-224-7383 to report the waste.





## Can I throw syringes in the trash?

No. It's against the law to throw syringes in the garbage, even if they are in a secure plastic container. Instead, drop the container in one of the following sharps boxes or Metro Facilities:

- On the west side Waterfront Park Esplanade, under the Burnside Bridge
- On the side of the day-storage container under the west side of the Steel Bridge
- Metro Central at 6161 NW 61st Ave, Portland, OR 97210
- Metro South at 2001 Washington St, Oregon City, OR 97045

For more disposal options, [contact Metro](#) at 503-234-3000.

## What if I see a syringe dropbox is full or has been damaged?

For maintenance and repair issues, please call Multnomah County Facilities at 503-988-3779.

## Where do I dispose of diabetic syringes or other medical waste?

Do not dispose of household medical sharps or other waste in syringe disposal boxes intended for community disposal. For households where syringes are used, medical sharps must be put in a sharps container. Those can be taken to a hazardous waste center:

- [Metro Central](#) at 6161 NW 61st Ave, Portland, OR 97210, [map](#)
- [Metro South](#) at 2001 Washington St, Oregon City, OR 97045, [map](#)

Enroll in the Metro syringe disposal program for \$5 and get a free sharps container each time you return one. A \$5 hazardous waste fee for up to 35 gallons is also required.

Group homes, residential care facilities and other commercial or business customers should contact a medical waste management company, their garbage hauler or Metro's recycling hotline for disposal options.

If you have questions about medical waste disposal, [contact Metro](#) at 503-234-3000.

## I want to help. Where can I find out about organizing a neighborhood cleanup?

Contact the City of Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability at 503-823-7202 for city-organized cleanup dates and locations.

Neighborhood Coalitions also schedule cleanup events:

- [Central Northeast Neighbors \(CNN\)](#)
- [East Portland Neighborhood Office \(EPNO\)](#)
- [Neighbors West/Northwest \(NW/NW\)](#)
- [North Portland Neighborhood Services \(NPNS\)](#)
- [Northeast Coalition of Neighborhoods \(NECN\)](#)
- [Southeast Uplift Neighborhood Coalition \(SEUL\)](#)
- [Southwest Neighborhoods, Inc. \(SWNI\)](#)

Many neighborhoods and community groups are organizing clean up events. Talk to your local

city government or neighborhood association about organizing an event close to home. Portland residents can find information about your neighborhood association from the City of Portland **Office of Community & Civic Life** at 503-823-4519.

Volunteer on a cleanup or find out about how to organize your own neighborhood clean up with **SOLVE** or **Hands On Greater Portland**.

