

# Best Management Practices for Cleanup Event Organizers in Handling Sharps

## What are Sharps?

Sharps are anything with the capability of puncturing or cutting through the skin. Typical sharps include uncapped needles, syringes with needles attached, knives, razor blades, broken glass, fish hooks, thorns, and jagged metals. Sharps have the potential of being infected with biological, toxic, or radioactive substances that pose health risks when coupled with cuts or puncture wounds.

## What are the Risks?

Sharps pose an immediate danger to river/creek cleanup crews if not managed properly. The biggest hazard in dealing with sharps is the risk of exposure to bloodborne pathogens. Bloodborne pathogens are microorganisms that are present in blood and other bodily fluids that can cause diseases such as HIV, Hepatitis B, and Hepatitis C.

## Personal Protective Equipment

To avoid health risks associated with bloodborne pathogens, it is important that cleanup crews utilize personal protective equipment when handling sharps. The following items should be kept readily available during cleanup events in case any sharps are found:

- FDA-approved sharps disposal container
- First aid kit
- Disposable and puncture resistant gloves
- Trash picker (or sturdy tongs)
- Soap and water
- Broom and dustpan
- Marking flags
- Plastic bucket
- Safety goggles or face shield
- Law enforcement contact information
- City/County contact information
- Towelettes or hand sanitizer

## How to Cleanup Sharps

1. Bring all the necessary cleanup equipment to the marked sharp location (gloves, sharps container, trash picker, plastic bucket, broom, and dustpan). Never walk with the sharp item to a different location.
2. Put on your gloves (puncture resistant gloves under disposable gloves) and goggles and place the sharps container or bucket on a flat surface next to the cleanup site.
3. Pick up broken glass or other noncontaminated sharps using the trash picker or the broom and dustpan and place these items in the designated plastic bucket. Never pick up glass by hand.
4. Pick up needles and syringes using a trash picker or tongs. Only pick up one item at a time.
5. Always keep the sharp end pointed down and away from you and others.
6. Keep the sharps container below eye level in an area that is of good visibility for both yourself and volunteers.
7. Never break, recap, or alter the needle in any way. Place the entire needle or syringe in the sharps container. Any wrappers or containers should also be placed in the sharps container. Do not overfill the container. Make sure it can always be securely closed.
8. Close the lid tightly and place the container in a safe area when you are done picking up the sharps. Never remove anything from a sharps container and never use your hands to force anything into the container.
9. If your goggles or face shield become contaminated, place them in a separate bag for disposal.
10. Remove and dispose of your gloves and wash all used tools thoroughly with soap and water.

Once all other steps are complete, wash your hands with soap and water and sanitize your hands before moving on to another task.

### NOTICE

**If at any moment your skin is punctured or cut by a sharp item or you come in contact with any infectious material, immediately wash the exposed area with soap and warm water, report the issue to your supervisor, and seek immediate medical attention. In the event of an emergency, stop what you are doing and call 911.**

## How to Dispose of Sharps

State law makes it illegal to dispose of sharps in the trash or recycling containers, and requires that all sharps waste be transported to a collection center in a FDA-approved sharps container.

Please refer to the provided list of certified sharps and needles disposal locations within Sonoma County and Mendocino County to properly dispose of the collected sharps. Contact your local law enforcement agency, public works, or parks department should you need further assistance disposing of sharps or other hazardous waste materials found at the cleanup site.

## Sharps Disposal Locations

The following contacts are locations and mail-back services that accept sharps in FDA-approved sharps containers within Sonoma County and Mendocino County:

### Dollar Drug

1055 West College Avenue, Suite C  
Santa Rosa, CA 95401  
Mon-Fri, 9:00 AM – 7:00 PM and Sat, 10:00 AM – 3:00 PM  
(707) 575-1313, call first

### Lark Drugs Guerneville

16251 Main Street  
Guerneville, CA 95446  
Mon-Fri, 9:00 AM – 6:30 PM and Sat, 11:00 AM – 3:00 PM  
(707) 869-9055, call first

### Healdsburg District Hospital

1375 University Street  
Healdsburg, CA 95448  
Mon-Fri, 7:00 AM – 5:00 PM  
(707) 431-6500

### MendoRecycle Household Hazardous Waste Facility

3200 Taylor Drive  
Ukiah, CA 95482  
Tues, Wed, and 2<sup>nd</sup> Sat of each month, 8:00 AM – 2:00 PM  
(707) 468-9710  
info@mendorecycle.org

### Household Hazardous Waste Facility

Central Disposal Site, Building #5  
500 Meham Road  
Petaluma, CA 94952  
Thurs-Sat, 7:30 AM – 2:30 PM  
(707) 795-3660  
toxicsdisposal@cleanharbors.com

### Mendocino HazMobile

Location varies by date, call for availability  
9:00 AM – 1:00 PM  
(707) 468-9710  
info@mendorecycle.org

### Household Hazardous Waste Collection Events

Location varies by date, call or email for appointment  
Tues 4:00 PM – 8:00 PM  
(707) 795-2025  
toxicsdisposal@cleanharbors.com

### Sharps Container, Inc.

<https://www.sharpsinc.com/>  
9220 Kirby Drive, Suite 500  
Houston, Texas (mail-back service)  
(800) 772-5657  
Mon-Fri, 7:00 AM – 7:00 PM

### Household Hazardous Waste Rover Service (home-generated waste only. Fees may apply.)

Pick up at your home, call or email for appointment  
Wed (times vary)  
(707) 795-2025  
toxicsdisposal@cleanharbors.com

### Stericycle, Inc.

<https://www.stericycle.com/>  
28161 North Keith Drive  
Lake Forest, Illinois (mail-back service)  
(800) 355-8773  
Mon-Fri, 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM

For more information regarding sharps disposal locations in your area, please visit: <https://safeneedledisposal.org/>