

**Waste Management and Prevention Division  
1 National Life Drive, Davis 1  
Montpelier, Vermont 05620-3704**

**Main Line: (802) 828-1138  
Fax: (802) 828-1011**

**Website: <http://dec.vermont.gov/waste-management>**

**SOLID WASTE AND RECYCLING PROGRAM  
WASTE MANAGEMENT AND PREVENTION DIVISION  
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION  
AGENCY OF NATURAL RESOURCES  
STATE OF VERMONT**

**PROCEDURE ADDRESSING HOME GENERATED MEDICAL WASTE  
HANDLING AND DISPOSAL**

**Original: June 2001  
Amended: July 2018**

**Section 1      Applicability**

Proper handling and disposal methods for these wastes are critical to minimize risks to public health and safety and to the environment. Guidance provided by *EPA Community Options for Safe Needle Disposal*.

- (a) Any wastes generated from the use of pharmaceuticals, testing supplies, injectable medications, and waste saturated by bodily fluids generated in the private residence.
- (b) These wastes are generated from products that are originally acquired and self-administered by the resident. Many of these wastes would be considered RMW if generated in a health care facility.
- (c) Any waste generated by licensed healthcare professionals or trauma scene waste is RMW and excluded from this definition.

**Section 2      Handling for Used Sharps**

- (a) After administration of sharps:
  - (1) Leave the needle of the syringe intact; and
  - (2) Place syringe, needle end down, into an acceptable container.
- (b) If used sharps are discovered improperly contained:
  - (1) Wear heavy-duty gloves;
  - (2) Use a tool like tongs or pliers, not bare hands, to pick up the sharp;
  - (3) Leave the needle of the syringe intact; and
  - (4) Place syringe, needle end down, into an acceptable container.

**Section 3      Disposal**

- (a) Unused Medications: Drop off all unused prescription medications to a secured location for proper disposal. All other unused and expired medications may be included with these medications.
- (b) Used Sharps Mail Back Program: Contact an approved U.S. Postal Service or courier delivery company to receive a disposal system that, when 2/3 full of medical waste, can be shipped back to the company for proper disposal. This company will provide the service of an approved container, pre-paid shipping box, pre-addressed labels, and any necessary disposal documentation.

- (c) Used sharps may be mixed with solid waste when following the guidance of the *EPA Community Options for Safe Needle Disposal*.
  - (1) If a container designed for sharps is not available, place in a hard, plastic container, such as a laundry detergent or bleach bottle with a screw top. Look for the mark #2 HDPE on the bottom of the container to make sure the plastic container is strong enough.
  - (2) The container should be closed securely with the screw cap and use strong tape, like duct tape, along the edges to prevent containers from opening. The container may be placed in the municipal solid waste with the label "DO NOT RECYCLE" on the container.
- (d) Potentially infectious bodily fluids: Contain the fluids by adding absorbent materials, i.e. paper towels, with the fluids in a container prior to disposal to prevent leaking from the bag.
- (e) General medical waste to include bandages, dressings, etc., which are saturated by bodily fluids shall be placed in a separate container from the used sharps and disposed of in the regular household trash. Contain the fluids by adding absorbent materials, i.e. paper towels, with the fluids in a container prior to disposal to prevent leaking from the bag.

Effective Date

This Procedure is effective upon date of Signature and will expire 5 years hence or when superseded by Rule.



July 10, 2018

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Rebecca Ellis, Deputy Commissioner  
Department of Environmental Conservation

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Date