

# 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.