

Member's inquiry – sharps management

On February 15, 2012 we asked:

Our good friends in Niagara Region are working on adjusting their protocol for dealing with the disposal of needles/syringes. They are looking for answers to the following questions:

1. Are needles allowed to be collected with garbage from the curb? If so, is there any special packaging requirements?
2. Are needles in the garbage/recycle bins addressed in your Waste By-law? How does your municipality recommend residents dispose of needles?
3. What steps are taken when needles/syringes are found in curbside garbage or recycle bins by the collection contractor?
4. What is the protocol when residents call in and say they "found" a needle?

Please answer by hitting "Reply" and we will pass along the information.

RESPONSES:

From Chantal Mathieu in Greater Sudbury

Chantal.Mathieu@greatersudbury.ca

1. Are needles allowed to be collected with garbage from the curb? If so, is there any special packaging requirements? ABSOLUTELY NOT.
2. Are needles in the garbage/recycle bins addressed in your Waste By-law? YES How does your municipality recommend residents dispose of needles? PLACE IN PUNCTURE PROOF CONTAINER AND DELIVER TO HHW DEPOT OR A PHARMACY THAT WILL TAKE THEM OR CALL OUR TOXIC TAXI.
3. What steps are taken when needles/syringes are found in curbside garbage or recycle bins by the collection contractor? IF WE SEE IT BEFORE COLLECTION WE LEAVE IT THERE AND CONTACT THE PROPERTY OWNER TO HAVE IT REMOVED FROM THE CURB. IF WE DON'T SEE IT AND THE COLLECTOR IS HURT WE FOLLOW UP WITH THE RESIDENT. SOMETIMES WE DEMAND THAT THEY USE HARD SHELL CONTAINERS. IF THIS DOESN'T WORK, WE'LL SUSPEND COLLECTION. THIS RARELY HAPPENS.
4. What is the protocol when residents call in and say they "found" a needle? SAME AS #3 IF ON THEIR RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY. IF ON PUBLIC

PROPERTY...WE HAVE A LOCAL CONTACT FROM A NEEDLE EXCHANGE THAT CAN PICK IT UP OR A CITY WORKER (FOREPERSON/TROUBLE INVESTIGATORS ARE TO HAVE A PUNCTURE PROOF KIT IN THEIR CITY VEHICLES).

.....
Ray.Garner@ottawa.ca

1. Are needles allowed to be collected with garbage from the curb? If so, is there any special packaging requirements?

No these are not permitted to be collected or set out at the curb as per our by-law 9By-law 2009-396

NO COLLECTION BY CITY

16. (1) The City's residential waste collection system shall not include the collection and removal of any prohibited materials as set out in Schedule "J", unless permitted by the Deputy City Manager.

Schedule "J" - Prohibited Material

Item	Sharps (needles, syringes, glass stem pipes, lancets,
28.	insulin tips);

2. Are needles in the garbage/recycle bins addressed in your Waste By-law? How does your municipality recommend residents dispose of needles?

They are identified in the By-law as per above. Residents are to bring the needle to take it back participants such as their local pharmacies. Sharps must be placed in a puncture proof container

3. What steps are taken when needles/syringes are found in curbside garbage or recycle bins by the collection contractor?

Starting in 2011, Solid waste has taken a zero tolerance approach to materials placed in the waste stream that may potentially cause harm to resident or operators. (ie ammunition, propane tanks and sharps). Notice of Violations and Provincial Offence Notices are issued to the property owner and or resident.

4. What is the protocol when residents call in and say they "found" a needle?

Resident are requested to report to our 311 call line. A city staff member will come by and collect the needle as a priority call. All discarded needles are reported and tracked.

.....

The Town of Smiths Falls has a small population so residents are allowed to return to pharmacy and or hospital for disposal. We do not accept in garbage and is written in our garbage by-law.

Vanessa Bligdon-Bernicky, Town of Smiths Falls

Phone: 613-283-4124 ext. 1147

.....

From Jana Clayton jclayton@London.ca
Ph: 519 661-2500 x 5419

1. Are needles allowed to be collected with garbage from the curb? If so, is there any special packaging requirements? We discourage residents from placing needles out for collection. We ask that they are placed in hard rigid plastic containers and to contact a local pharmacy or visit the health unit (www.healthunit.com) website or www.makethedrop.ca for safe disposal information.

2. Are needles in the garbage/recycle bins addressed in your Waste By-law? How does your municipality recommend residents dispose of needles? Yes, needles are addressed in our waste by-law. We state that they must be packaged and labelled in plastic rigid containers. See above for **recommended** disposal information.

3. What steps are taken when needles/syringes are found in curbside garbage or recycle bins by the collection contractor? If needles are set out for collection and not packaged properly collection crews are instructed to leave behind and contact their Supervisor. A violation notice or letter reminding residents of the proper disposal techniques is sent/dropped off to the homeowner.

4. What is the protocol when residents call in and say they "found" a needle? If they are found in a city park or downtown area we have a contractor who deals with sharps handling and proper disposal. If a needle is found on private property it is the responsibility of the home owner to collect and dispose of. We encourage the use of leather gloves and tongs, and to dispose in a hard plastic container. We don't often hear of needles being found on private property, most often it is a city park or downtown area.

.....

Alex Piggott in Woodstock apiggott@city.woodstock.on.ca

In Woodstock, we do not accept needles in the waste stream.

They are prohibited in the waste bylaw. They can use special bins that are provided by pharmacists such as Shopper's Drug Mart. We also host three hazardous waste days and we will accept medical waste (needles) at this event but they have to be in appropriate containers.

If we find needles in the garbage we have trained qualified staff to deal with them and pick them up. Are collection is done by internal staff so we do not have a contractor issue to deal with.

If a resident calls in and says they found a needle, if it's on City property we pick it up. If it's on private property it's their responsibility to contact someone to dispose of it properly.

.....

Lisamaria Akeson

WHITBY akesonl@whitby.ca

1. Are needles allowed to be collected with garbage from the curb? If so, is there any special packaging requirements?

Whitby has a strict policy that needles and syringes are prohibited in the residential curbside garbage.

2. Are needles in the garbage/recycle bins addressed in your Waste By-law? How does your municipality recommend residents dispose of needles?

YES: this is in schedule C of our waste By-Law as a prohibited waste and are subject to fines.

3. What steps are taken when needles/syringes are found in curbside garbage or recycle bins by the collection contractor?

We document this always, then meet with the resident in person if possible giving them a verbal or written warning that these items are not accepted in our curbside waste program. We use this more as an opportunity to educate the resident that this rule is for the safety of our community and our collection staff.

In the past we have gone as far as discontinuing service until the resident can prove to us they have made efforts to keep this out of the garbage (i.e. they must show us they have a sharps container).

4. What is the protocol when residents call in and say they "found" a needle?

Our parks and roads staff have been trained on how to safely handle needles. All of our operations vehicles have a sharps container in them. This is reported to our Health and Safety Officer as well as the Durham Region Health Unit.

.....

.....

Caroline.Kirkpatrick@vaughan.ca

1. Are needles allowed to be collected with garbage from the curb? If so, is there any special packaging requirements? **Needles and other sharps are deemed non collectible waste and hence will not be collected with any curbside waste**

2. Are needles in the garbage/recycle bins addressed in your Waste By-law? How does your municipality recommend residents dispose of needles? **Needles / sharps are addressed in the bylaw as being non collectible. Residents are informed that they can take their sharps to the local HHW depot (must be in rigid closed containers) or some pharmacy's also have 'take back' program.**

3. What steps are taken when needles/syringes are found in curbside garbage or recycle bins by the collection contractor?

We don't collect it. Staff will notify by-laws with the intent of issuing a fine.

4. What is the protocol when residents call in and say they "found" a needle? **Same process as if it was theirs.**

.....

1. No, they are not allowed in curbside garbage.
2. Our by-law says we cannot collect bio-medical waste with regular garbage. We recommend that residents bring them to our HHW Depot in a proper sharps container or that they send them back to their pharmacist.
3. The garbage or recycling is left behind and staff will go and visit the location to inform them that this is not acceptable in the garbage/recycling. We had one incident where there were so many syringes/needles through the garbage bag, the collection driver loaded it with a shovel into the collection truck because there were kids in the area.
4. The City's Pollution Control Division responds to calls from the public about sharps. Also see the attached Health & Safety policy staff follows.

Greg Preston, City of Orillia, Tel: (705) 325-2444

.....

1. Are needles allowed to be collected with garbage from the curb? If so, is there any special packaging requirements? **Needles are not allowed.**

2. Are needles in the garbage/recycle bins addressed in your Waste By-law? How does your municipality recommend residents dispose of needles? **It is in by-law. Residents are asked to check with their pharmacy or they can bring them into our HHW site.**

3. What steps are taken when needles/syringes are found in curbside garbage or recycle bins by the collection contractor? **Depending on the quantity found a by-law officer is usually dispatched to follow-up with resident.**

4. What is the protocol when residents call in and say they "found" a needle? **By-law officer responds to collect sharp to dispose of properly.**

John Strik - JStrik@regionofwaterloo.ca

.....