



SAN FRANCISCO DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH OCCUPATIONAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SECTION

Dirty Needles: Keeping Them Off Our Streets



Used syringes and needles are health hazards, potentially exposing the public to diseases like Hepatitis B which are transmitted through blood. The list below describes how the City works to keep dirty needles off San Francisco streets.

- The San Francisco Safe Needle Disposal Program provides a safe, convenient and free option for San Francisco residents to dispose of needles and sharps from their home. Residents of San Francisco can obtain and dispose of needle disposal containers at most Walgreen's stores and San Francisco Hazardous Waste Drop-off Facility. San Francisco General Hospital, the Department of Public Health District Health Centers, San Francisco Kaiser Hospital, and the Veteran's Administration Medical Center also provide needle disposal containers for clients. For general information about the Safe Needle Disposal Program, contact the SF Recycling and Disposal at (415) 330-1400.
- The San Francisco AIDS Foundation's HIV Prevention Project (HPP) has provided street-based needle exchange services to injecting drug users (IDUs) since 1993. HPP currently has 10 needle exchange sites a week and is one of the nation's largest needle exchange programs, exchanging more than two million needles a year. HPP is a volunteer-driven program supported by over 80 volunteers. For further information call 415-241-5100.
- The Department of Public Works-Bureau of Street Environmental Services is responsible for the cleanliness of San Francisco's streets. DPW uses mechanical sweepers, strategic litter receptacle placement, and city work crews to keep streets clean pro-actively. In response to complaints, staff removes needles disposed in public areas. The Bureau of Street Environmental Services can be reached at 415-695-2017.
- The Department of Public Health-Environmental Health Section (SFDPH-EHS) responds to reports of illegally disposed hazardous chemicals and medical waste. Along with DPW, SFDPH-EHS staff will remove improperly disposed needles and ensure the proper disposal. SFDPH-EHS also provide training to other City departments, public agencies, and community groups on how to safely pick up and dispose contaminated syringes. The SFDPH-EHS Hazardous Waste Program can be reached at 415-252-3962.
- The Department of Public Health-Environmental Health Section-Hazardous Materials Unified Program Agency (HMUPA) regulates businesses that produce medical wastes including needles and other sharps ensuring their safe disposal. The unit also investigates concerns on illegally disposed commercial medical wastes. The HMUPA can be reached at 415-252-3900.

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