



Arkansas Department of Health

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GUIDELINES FOR SAFE MANAGEMENT & DISPOSAL OF HOUSEHOLD-GENERATED NEEDLES AND SHARPS

If you are a household generator of contaminated sharps and you do have a community sharps collection program in your area, approved sharps containers are usually provided free of charge from the collection program. You should use these containers according to the instructions provided by the collection program.

If you are a household generator of contaminated sharps and you do not have a community sharps collection program in your area, the following guidance from *Arkansas' Rules Pertaining to Medical Waste from Generators and Health Care Related Facilities* should be used for the safe disposal of household-generated contaminated needles and sharps:

1. **ACCUMULATION:** Section V, C., 2. of the Rule states that "...leak proof containers should be used for disposal of all sharps, which should be chemically disinfected before disposal as regular solid waste." Thick plastic, puncture resistant containers (such as liquid soap, laundry soap or fabric softener containers) should be used to accumulate and temporarily store the sharps prior to disinfection and disposal. Any such container used for this purpose must have a cap or lid that can be tightly secured to protect against any accidental exposure. Once the container is $\frac{2}{3}$ full, it is ready for disinfection and disposal.
2. **DISINFECTION:** Section VI, F., 3., b. of the Rule states that the chemical disinfection process to be used, as approved by the Environmental Protection Agency, is soaking the contaminated needles and sharps in a solution of one (1) part hypochlorite bleach "to no more than ten (10) parts of water (1:10 dilution), for at least ten (10) minutes." This 1:10 bleach solution should be introduced into the laundry soap container, covering all of the contents completely, and then allowed to sit for at least 10 minutes. After soaking, the excess liquid solution should be drained into a sink drain or a commode. The excess bleach solution must be drained prior to disposal of the container of disinfected sharps.
3. **DISPOSAL:** After chemical disinfection has been completed, the laundry soap container holding the disinfected needles and sharps must be securely closed before double bagging for disposal as regular solid waste. Do not put a red biohazard bag or container in the solid waste stream.

Any questions regarding these guidelines should be directed to the Arkansas Department of Health Medical Waste Program Manager, Heather Parker-Foster, at (501) 661-2621.