

# Medical Sharps Stewardship Bill (HB 2360)

*Improperly disposed **used sharps** (needles and injection devices) are a serious health hazard for needlesticks and spread of infectious diseases to waste industry workers and the general public.*

## Washington needs a convenient, safe, statewide sharps disposal program

- People using self-injection medicines at home **are often confused about how to dispose of sharps** resulting in unsafe needle disposal in household trash or recycling bins.
- **Sharps collection sites are too limited so disposal guidances vary across the state.** A few areas prohibit disposal of any sharps in the household trash. But in most of the state, residents are advised to put used sharps inside a plastic container and put the container in the trash. Residents may not follow this advice or may not have an appropriate rigid plastic container or may incorrectly put the container into the recycling bin instead.
- **Workers at recycling and solid waste facilities suffer needlestick injuries** as a result and need testing and potentially treatment for serious infectious diseases.
- **Discarded needles in public areas are an increasing problem.** Loose needles in public trashcans, public bathrooms, and parks are a dangerous health risk, with parents particularly worried about the hazard for kids.
- **Local governments are facing increasing costs** of cleaning up and disposing of discarded needles through programs operated by local health jurisdictions, parks departments, police, and fire agencies.

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*An average of more than **1,500 sharps** were found each month at one WA recycling facility resulting in a shutdown of the line for an average of 40 minutes per week.*

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## What this bill does: Establishes a Sharps Stewardship Program providing convenient, effective disposal of sharps waste from residents through collection sites and mail-back services

- **Increase safety and convenience** for residents who need to dispose of sharps at home, at work, or while traveling.
- **Reduce improper disposal of sharps** in our solid waste and recycling systems to prevent hazardous and costly **needlestick injuries** to workers.
- Provide funding for municipal programs that prevent needlestick injuries through **safe clean-up and collection of sharps waste**.
- **Shifts costs** associated with managing end-of-life of sharps from ratepayers to the manufacturers of injectable drugs and sharps as part of their business costs. Sharps producers already provide take-back programs in parts of California, some Canadian provinces and European countries.



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