

Community Sharps Collections

A Growing Problem

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates that there are approximately eight million individuals in the United States who must administer injections in the home, primarily diabetics, producing approximately three billion sharps (needles, lancets, etc.) per year. Local, county, and state offices receive numerous telephone calls from Michigan residents who are looking for a safe and responsible alternative to disposing of used sharps along with their other household waste. Improperly disposed sharps can be a potential hazard to municipal trash haulers, landfill workers, children, and pets as they can be a potential source of transmissible diseases such as Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C, and HIV.

A Proactive Solution

Recognizing the need for a collection program in Isabella County, Amy Shindorf, Resource Recovery Director for the Isabella County Recycling Center, and Abbey Wojno, a student from Central Michigan University, worked with government, community, and private business groups to develop a new sharps disposal program for residents called “BEE SMART WITH YOUR SHARPS.” Residents of Isabella County are provided with free sharps containers at several locations and can dispose of them safely and properly at designated permanent community sharps collection bins when the containers are full.



For More Information

Contact Marnie Basney, Isabella County Recycling Environmental Education Specialist, via e-mail at recycling@isbellacounty.org or at 989-773-9631, or visit the “BEE SMART WITH YOUR SHARPS” Web site at <http://beesmartsharps.org>.

Not a Resident of Isabella County?

For community sharps collection programs in other counties, please visit the DEQ’s Medical Waste Regulatory Program Web site at <http://www.michigan.gov/deqmedwaste> (click on “Sharps Collection Programs for Michigan Residents” located under the “Information” section). For further information, you may also contact Andy Shannon, Medical Waste Regulatory Program, Waste and Hazardous Materials Division, DEQ, via e-mail at shannoal@michigan.gov or at 517-335-1146.