

The Safe Needle Disposal Guide provides important information on *safe needle disposal practices*.



Needles and needle debris are a challenging issue for the community of Terrace. Needles are used by people with specific health conditions, including people with specific addictions. Ensuring that people who use needles can access safe disposal, and that stray needles and needle debris in the community are dealt with promptly and safely is one of the goals of this guide. This guide outlines best practices for the safe disposal of needles in order to help protect the health and safety of all citizens of Terrace.

What should I do if I get poked by a needle?

- Do not squeeze the wound to make it bleed more. This may damage the tissues and make it easier for an infection to enter the body.
- Wash well with soap and warm water.
- Go directly to the local emergency room for assessment.



Safe Needle Disposal

1

Do not try to put the cap back on the needle, snap, remove, or bend needles.



2

Pick the needle up carefully with tongs or pliers. Ensure the needle tip is pointing down and away from you.



3

Discard the needle into a sharps container if near by or put the needle in a strong plastic container such as a bleach bottle or plastic peanut butter jar. Do not use glass as it can break, nor light plastic or milk carton because needles can easily poke through.



4

Take the sealed container to the Terrace Health Unit (3412 kalum street) or to a pharmacy or immediately dispose in a City sharps receptacle.



A clean and safe Terrace is a shared responsibility



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SAFE NEEDLE DISPOSAL INFORMATION GUIDE



What should I do if I find a discarded needle?

Children...

You should leave the needle where it is. Call an adult for help.

Adults...

If you see a needle, and you have appropriate equipment to handle it safely, you can pick it up so that a child does not get injured or poked. You can pick the needle up carefully by following these four steps or you can call for help (see below). You don't need to be afraid if you're cautious.

1. Use a pair of tongs or pliers to pick up the needle by the barrel or with a gloved hand.
2. Grasp the needle by the plastic barrel, at the opposite end from the needle tip. Point the needle tip down and away from yourself. **IMPORTANT: Do not try to put the cap back on the needle.**
3. Put the needle in a strong plastic container, on a stable surface, and tape the lid tightly closed (with duct tape, if you have it). Bleach bottles are good because they have a small opening and a screw-on lid. A thick plastic peanut butter jar will work. You shouldn't use a glass jar or light plastic or a milk carton. Glass can break and needles easily poke through light plastic or milk cartons.
4. Take the sealed container to the **Terrace Health Unit** at 3412 Kalum Street, or to a pharmacy that accepts needles OR dispose in a City sharps receptacle. *Note that most pharmacies only accept needles returned by their own customers.*



What risks are associated with discarded needles?

UNSAFE WAYS TO DISPOSE OF NEEDLES	WHY IS IT UNSAFE?
(X) Putting needles in the garbage.	Waste collectors can get poked if the needles are loose or in a container. Containers can get crushed and the needles come through.
(X) Putting needles in the recycling bag or blue bin.	Waste Management workers sort all the recycled items we put in blue bags by hand. A worker could get poked by a needle.
(X) Putting needles down toilet. Putting needles down sewer.	The needles go into the sewer system and then into the river. People or animals could get poked and it is environmentally unclean.
(X) Putting needles on the ground or under a bush.	A child, adult or pet could get scratched or poked.
(X) Tucking needles into places they won't be seen.	A person cleaning, such as a janitor or housekeeping staff, could get hurt.

Can I get an infection from a discarded needle?

The vast majority of people who get poked by a used needle do not get sick, because most viruses die within minutes to hours after being exposed to the open air. But since there is no way to know how recently the needle was discarded, it is best to be cautious.

If you get poked with the needle tip, or the needle touches part of your skin that is already open (cut or scraped), it may be possible to get an infection, particularly if there is fresh blood on the needle.

The main infections that can be spread by used needles are hepatitis B, hepatitis C, and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).

These viruses are spread from the blood or body fluids of one person who has hepatitis to the blood or body fluids of another person.

What are Hepatitis B and C?

Hepatitis is a disease of the liver, caused by a virus.

- You may get hepatitis if you share needles or other injection equipment.
- You may get the disease if you get poked by a needle with infected blood on it.
- You may get the disease if you have sex with someone who is infected.

You can prevent getting or passing Hepatitis B & C to someone else by:

- Getting the hepatitis B vaccine.
- Practicing safer sex by using a condom.
- Only using clean needles.
- Disposing of used needles safely.



A PERSON WHO HANDLES GARBAGE CAN GET POKED IF SOMEONE HAS TOSSED A NEEDLE IN THE BIN

