

Tempe Fire Department Policies and Procedures
Residential Medical Waste Disposal
306.03
Rev 11-12-09

PURPOSE

To provide guidelines to advise the public on the proper and safe disposal of residential generated used medical sharps e.g. needles, syringes, lancets, etc. To insure procedures provided to the public are consistent with the recommendations established by the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ). To improve safety and minimize the health risk to firefighters, refuse haulers, landfill personnel and the community. To prevent Fire Department members from accepting used sharps from the public, this practice could lead to unmanageable volumes of used medical sharps and expense.

POLICY

Fire Department personnel can NOT accept used sharps from the public. Fire Department members will still be helpful by advising the public as to the safe disposal procedures they can use to comply with the recommendations established by ADEQ.

PROCEDURE

Do NOT accept used sharps from the public, but cordially advise them, because residential generated sharps are exempted from regulation in Arizona's Medical Waste Regulations (Arizona Administrative Code (A.A.C.) R18-13-1401 et seq.), these items can be placed in their regular trash provided the following recommendations are followed:

1. These items should be placed in either a purchased medical sharps container (from a pharmacy or health care provider) or a heavy-plastic or metal container. The containers should be puncture-proof with a tight-fitting lid. Household containers such as plastic detergent bottles can be used.
2. Write the words "Not Recyclable" on the container with a black indelible marker.
3. Use heavy-duty tape such as electrical or duct tape to secure the lid
4. Do NOT use a clear or glass container.
5. Do NOT over-stuff the containers
6. While waiting for a container to become full:
 - a. Keep out of reach of children and pets.
 - b. Always wash your hands after handling or touching medical sharps.
7. After these precautions, the container may be placed in your regular trash for disposal.
8. This policy is only as a recommended procedure for the public to dispose of home generated medical sharps and is NOT to be applied to Fire Department generated sharps.