



MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
OFFICE OF POLLUTION CONTROL
SOLID WASTE DIVISION
P. O. BOX 2261
JACKSON, MS 39225

GUIDANCE FOR ESTABLISHING AND OPERATING COLLECTION STATIONS FOR HOME-GENERATED SHARPS

1. A sharps collection station is a site where medical sharps are received from persons who generate sharps in their home. Pharmacies, medical clinics, fire stations, local government buildings, and county health offices are examples of places where a sharps collection station may be located.
2. “Medical sharps” means needles, syringes, lancets or other sharp objects used to penetrate the skin for medical testing or for delivery of medication.
3. Collection stations should only accept home-generated sharps. Where diabetics and others who administer themselves an injection in a locale other than the home (such as a hotel, restaurant or office building), but then carry the used sharp home with them for disposal, that sharp is considered to be a home-generated medical sharp that can be accepted at a collection station. Sharps should not be accepted from private businesses.
4. Any person wishing to operate a sharps collection station should register their station with the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ). To register, the owner or operator of the collection station should complete a registration form obtained by contacting the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality, P.O. Box 2261, Jackson, MS 39225, phone 601-961-5171, or by going online to [Household Sharps – MDEQ](#). In lieu of completing a registration form, you may send a letter stating the name of the business or organization where the station is located, street address, city, and zip code, the name of the person operating the station, mailing address and phone number. If you are registering more than one location for the same entity (e.g. fire departments, chain pharmacies, etc.), you may use one registration form and attach a listing of each location with its physical address.

The primary purpose of registration is so that the MDEQ will know where you are located and how many stations there are statewide. The MDEQ will include your station in a list of registered sharps collection stations and post the list on the MDEQ’s internet web site to help people locate places to take their sharps. If you request that the MDEQ exclude your name from its published list of registered stations, the MDEQ will honor that request.

5. Home sharps users are responsible for proper containerization and for transporting their sharps to a collection station. Collection station operators should visually check the containers before accepting them.
6. All sharps received from the public should be contained in either a sharps disposal container manufactured and sold by numerous pharmaceutical companies OR in any thick-walled, sturdy plastic container such as one used for bleach, liquid soap, washing powder, fabric softener, etc. Any container

originally used for other purposes should be triple-rinsed by the home user and free of any liquids when delivered to the collection station. Sharps contained in coffee cans, glass containers, paper or cardboard containers, or soft plastic containers (such as those used for soft drinks or milk) should not be accepted.

7. The operator should not allow the public to simply drop their sharps off in a box or bin set up in a public area. Sharps should always be given to a person at the station who is familiar with proper container guidance provided herein.
8. The operator may use its discretion in deciding how strict to be in accepting homemade containers. For example, coffee cans are not generally recommended for use because the lids are usually not screw-type and can therefore possibly come off before reaching their final disposal destination. However, if a sharps generator happens to bring sharps to your station in a coffee container with a screw-top lid and which appears to be sealed with duct tape sufficiently to prevent the top from accidentally coming off, the operator may use discretion in accepting the container. Likewise, if a generator brings sharps in with a proper container, but has no tape over the lid, you may use your discretion in accepting it or refusing it, depending on how safe or unsafe the container appears to be. Always feel free to offer advice to the generator about how they can better contain their sharps in the future and to refuse any container which the operator believes is unsafe. **NEVER** allow loose sharps to be accepted at your station.
9. If you discover “after the fact” that someone has dropped off sharps at your station in an unacceptable container, have an oversized sharps container available as part of a contingency plan. Always use gloves and tools to handle improperly contained sharps. If you feel that someone has left you with a dangerous situation that you cannot handle, you should contact the MDEQ’s Waste Division at 601-961-5171 for assistance.
10. Place all collected sharps in a box or bin separate from other wastes and secure from the public. Do not open the sharps containers.
11. If you have registered with the MDEQ, arrangements will be made for a solid waste collection and hauling company to periodically pick up the sharps you have collected and transport them to a disposal facility. If you experience any problems with getting the sharps picked up, you may contact the MDEQ in an attempt to resolve the problem. If you transport sharps yourself, do so in an enclosed portion of the vehicle, such as the trunk or an enclosed truck bed. As a sharps collection station in this program, you are not required to obtain a license to transport medical waste, nor to use a medical waste manifest, although commercial waste haulers sometimes choose to manifest the waste.
12. While you may decide for your own reasons to keep some sort of records of receipt of sharps, the MDEQ does not require any recordkeeping or paperwork associated with this program (other than registration). We do ask if you cease operating as a sharps collection station that you notify us in writing so that we can remove you from our published list of sites. The MDEQ will not routinely inspect your station to determine if you are following proper guidance. However, the MDEQ will respond to any complaints received about unsafe practices or conditions.