
Policy: Loose Needle Collection**Adopted by Board of Park Commissioners: May 2022**

To prevent injuries or illnesses to members of the public and City employees from improperly disposed of sharps, and to aid staff in the safe collection and disposal of sharps found in parks.

Policy Statement

The City of Bristol strives to provide safe public spaces for the use and enjoyment of all persons residing, working, recreating, or visiting Bristol. This policy outlines the procedures to minimize the risk of inappropriately discarded needles on City park land.

Note: Parks, Recreation, Youth and Community Services is not responsible for responding to or disposing of needs on private property.

Background

In a collaborative effort with external partners and internal staff, the Department of Parks, Recreation, Youth and Community Services has identified an immediate need to address the safety and security of personnel and those utilizing City parks. Staff collects and tracks improperly disposed of sharps. Staff frequently discover improperly discarded used sharps (e.g. hypodermic needles, syringes, lancets, and other paraphernalia) in trash cans, on restroom floors, in the landscape, and in many other locations within City parks' property. The purpose of this guideline is to provide safe needle and syringe collection and disposal.

Procedure

Only staff trained in the safe collection and disposal of hazardous sharps are authorized to do so. All maintenance staff shall be trained and provided with appropriate needle and syringe collection equipment. Collection receptacles shall be available in parks fleet vehicles and park buildings. All reasonable measures and precautions shall be taken by staff to protect their own health, as well as the health and safety of community members, in accordance with the procedure of this Policy and as required by the Occupational Health and Safety Act 1984, during the collection, disposal and transport of such waste. Staff must utilize the following procedure during the collection and disposal of needles and syringes:

1. Use an approved sharps disposal container. If an approved sharps disposal container is unavailable, find a strong, rigid-walled, plastic container with a screw-top lid, (e.g. a plastic soda container or similar; no glass bottles as they can shatter).
 - a. If you use anything other than an approved sharps disposal container: securely fasten the lid, tape it shut, and write "sharps waste" on the container in large letters with permanent marker. Dispose of the improvised container in an approved and appropriately-sized sharps disposal container.
 - b. Always wear the correct personal protective equipment as established during training.
 - c. Always wash hands thoroughly with soap and water after collecting sharps. If that's not available post sharps collection, apply hand sanitizer.

2. Take the container to the sharps (not the reverse), place the container on the ground next to the sharps. Do not hold the container when depositing the sharps.
3. Handle the sharps by the barrel end only (“non-needle” end), and never touch the sharp or metal end. Puncture resistant gloves shall be used as personal protective equipment by all staff members who are responsible for the collection of sharps.
4. Never try to re-cap a sharps or break off a needle.
5. Place the sharps inside the container.
6. Tightly secure the lid.
7. When emptying trash receptacles, whether sharps evidence (e.g. orange caps, etc.) is present or not:
 - a. Do not compact trash content with any body part (i.e. hands, feet, etc.)
 - b. Wear puncture proof gloves.
 - c. Handle the edges of the container only.
 - d. Hold the container away from your body.
8. When removing needle collection boxes from the approved sharps disposal container:
 - a. Look from the top first to make sure the container is not overfilled with needles.
 - b. Cautiously remove the container with the proper PPE (i.e. puncture resistant gloves).
 - c. Clean any signs of blood or bodily fluids around the receptacle with products known to kill pathogens (e.g. Bleach, Envy) prior to installing new collection cartridge.

Sharps Exposure Policy

In the event of a needle/syringe contact that breaks skin (e.g. puncture, scratch, cut), the employee shall immediately:

Step 1 Wash the injury thoroughly with soap and water. DO NOT squeeze the area around the injury to encourage bleeding.

Step 2 Collect the sharps properly and report the injury immediately to the Supervisor. The Supervisor will initiate a careful search of the area where the injury took place and recover any other items, using safe handling procedure.

Step 3 The employee, with the needle/syringe (in an approved sharps container), shall be taken immediately to MedWorks (975 Farmington Ave, Bristol, CT 06010) for medical treatment. Physicians may recommend blood tests or immunization. Prior to returning to work, a Return to Work form and the Provider’s Initial Report (PIR) form must be completed by a physician and returned to the Supervisor.

Step 4 The Supervisor will complete a workplace incident, accident, and/or injury report form in accordance with requirements of the Occupational Health & Safety Act of 1984.

Safe Disposal Methods

1. Rigid sharps containers shall be provided with disposable plastic inserts at the Park’s Maintenance Building (240 Jacobs Street) as well as other locations within park property, as deemed necessary.

2. Parks staff is responsible for the installation, repair, and maintenance of all rigid sharps containers and disposable plastic inserts on department property.
3. Any disposal and collection point that is damaged, rusted, missing a rigid sharps container, or is in substandard condition must be decommissioned, replaced or repaired, and reported to the Parks, Grounds, and Facilities Supervisor.
4. Sharps must not be clipped, bent, broken, recapped or otherwise altered. All precautions must be taken to prevent injury.
5. Puncture resistant gloves must be worn during this service. Note: these gloves are not impervious to needles and due care is to be taken.
6. The sharps container sites shall be clear, left clean and tidy to the satisfaction of City standards.
7. All Parks staff shall be trained in the following:
 - a. Blood Borne Pathogens
 - b. First Aid/ CPR
 - c. Narcan Administration
 - d. Safe collection practices and disposal techniques

Safety and Health Considerations

1. Staff shall wear all the proper personal protective equipment (PPE) garments (e.g. gloves, boots, vests, ear protection, safety glasses, hard hat, and other necessary attire).
2. If at any time staff feels unsafe or unsure with regard to any component of proper sharps handling procedures, they shall stop and ask the group leader or supervisor.
3. Staff shall never place body parts into areas where they cannot see.