

NSW Community Sharps Guidance Document

Summary This Information Bulletin provides information to assist stakeholders to understand the legal and policy framework for community sharps management. Understand the different roles and responsibilities for stakeholders in management of community sharps and develop local partnerships to collaborate in community sharps management.

Document type Information Bulletin

Document number IB2024_006

Publication date 22 January 2024

Author branch Centre for Population Health

Branch contact (02) 9424 5907

Review date 22 January 2027

Policy manual Not applicable

File number HA-2023-0002424

Status Active

Functional group Clinical/Patient Services - Infectious Diseases
Population Health - Communicable Diseases, Health Promotion

Applies to Local Health Districts

Distributed to Public Health System

Audience Administration;Allied Health Staff;Emergency Department;Needle & Syringe Programs;Health Promotion Units;Education

NSW Community Sharps Guidance Document

PURPOSE

The NSW Community Sharps Guidance Document has been published on the following NSW Health website: [Community Sharps Management \(nsw.gov.au\)](https://www.nsw.gov.au/health-and-services/community-sharps-management)

KEY INFORMATION

Community sharps are generated by community members through self-administered healthcare, body modification and recreational drug use. This includes used needles, syringes used for self-injecting purposes at a private residence or public place and lancets and other finger prickers.

Well managed community sharps, where people have reasonable access to safe disposal facilities, can contribute to the health and safety of communities and prevent the transmission of blood borne viruses and other needle stick injuries.

The inappropriate management and disposal of community sharps may pose a health and safety risk to the public, council employees, waste contractors and resource recovery operators. While the risk of blood borne virus transmission, including human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), hepatitis B or hepatitis C, is very low, any needle stick injury can potentially expose a risk.

ABOUT THE DOCUMENT

Stakeholders including Councils, Local Health Districts, government agencies, non-government organisations, businesses and the community all have a role in providing an effective disposal infrastructure and ensuring the safe disposal of sharps. The Guidance Document outlines a collaborative approach to effectively manage community sharps and create sustainable environments.

This document provides information to assist stakeholders to:

- Understand the legal and policy framework for community sharps management
- Understand the different roles and responsibilities for stakeholders in the management of community sharps
- Develop local partnerships to collaborate in community sharps management