

Cleaning Up Syringes in our Neighborhoods

September 2019



Who can I call to pick up used syringes on my block?

There is one community-based group that does syringe litter clean up based on resident requests. There are other non-profit groups in the area that also do pick-ups targeting their neighborhood. You can also call the City for help. Here are the details:

- **Southside Harm Reduction Services**, submit your request for a clean-up online at: www.southsideharmreduction.org/syringe-clean-up-request. Please note that Southside Harm Reduction Services can only respond to requests for clean-ups around South Minneapolis. They provide clean-ups Tuesdays at 5:30 p.m. and Saturdays at 4:30 p.m.
- **Call 311**. You can call the City's main information line by dialing 3-1-1 to report needles that should be picked up. The City will then send the request to our Fire Department.
- Other non-profit groups such as the Indigenous People's Task Force (IPTF), the Native American Community Clinic (NACC), and the American Indian Community Development Corporation (AICDC) have been doing regular syringe pick-up in their surrounding areas.

Syringe Disposal Kiosks

The City will be installing Syringe Disposal Kiosks in challenged areas of south Minneapolis by October 18, 2019. Currently, the City is securing permission from the appropriate property owners to install the kiosks. If you have questions about the Syringe Disposal Kiosks, if you want to report a broken kiosk, or if you want to share general feedback on the kiosk program, please **contact the City's Health Department Opioid Team at 612-358-4167**.

Neighborhood Needle Sweeps

The City's goal is to begin doing neighborhood needle sweeps by September 11, 2019 with a company trained in needle pick-ups to conduct the sweeps. The employees doing the pick-ups will wear high visibility vests, so they can be easily recognized by the community. They will also wear safety gloves and carry yard rake tools. Please note, the employees doing the sweeps will **not** be allowed to pick-up needles located on private property.

Schedule and Pick-Up Route

On rotating days for three days out of the week, the needle sweep team will be picking up needles between 7:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. The pick-up route will include sweeps on Bloomington Avenue South between Franklin Avenue and East Lake Street. The route will also include sweeps along the Greenway between Park Avenue and Hiawatha Avenue.

Questions?

If you have questions, feedback, or want to report a problem with the neighborhood needle sweeps, please **contact the City's Health Department Opioid Team at 612-358-4167**.

Can I pick up and dispose of used syringes myself?

The short answer is, yes. While the City does not expect residents to feel safe picking up used needles, you are allowed to dispose of used syringes that you find on your lawn or property. In Minnesota, the law allows residents to dispose of used sharps in a heavy plastic container with a lid (sealed with tape) and placed into the garbage. **Never place loose needles in the trash.**

Before you pick-up any used needles yourself, please take precaution and prepare by reading the City's Solid Waste website www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/solid-waste/whattodo/index.htm and following these tips from the City of Seattle Department of Health and Massachusetts:

- Treat all used needles as contaminated, diseases can spread through needle pokes.
- Never pick up a needle with your bare hands, wear puncture resistant gloves.
- Wear closed-toe shoes to protect your feet.
- Use a tool like tongs, pliers, or tweezers to pick up the needle.
- Don't discard loose needles in the trash. Use a hard plastic bottle or container like a laundry detergent bottle to throw the needles in the trash.
- Put the sharps container on a stable surface next to the needle. Avoid walking a far distance carrying a used needle.
- Do not hold the container in your hand while placing needles inside it.
- Pick up needles with the point facing away from you and place them in the container point down.
- Remove gloves carefully to avoid contact with contaminated fluid.
- Wash hands well afterwards.