

Home Medical Waste Disposal

For **ecomaine** Communities

Sharps (e.g. needles), bandages, prescriptions and other medical waste in small quantities from your home, may be disposed by including it with your residential trash. It is necessary to your safety, and to others in your household, and to those handling the trash that these items be securely contained before discarding. Both **ecomaine** and the law require the following disposal steps:

- **Sharps** You must choose a rigid, leak-proof, puncture-resistant container, such as a hard, plastic bottle with a screw-on or tightly secured lid (a liquid detergent bottle with a large opening is a good choice, or you may purchase a disposable container at a pharmacy). Then, store the container near where the sharps are generated, but out of the reach of children. To dispose of the container, label it using masking tape or duct tape and write on it, “Do NOT Recycle.” Screw the lid on tightly and secure it with tape to prevent accidental opening. Then, it can be included with your regular household trash.
- **Don'ts**
 - Don't use glass, milk jugs, milk cartons, or clear plastic containers (they may break, be punctured or taken for illicit use).
 - Don't put sharp objects in a container that will be recycled or returned to a store.
 - Don't forget to follow these rules when traveling, too!
- **Medications & Prescription Drugs** Residential prescription drug disposal may be done in free mailer envelopes sponsored by the Maine Drug Enforcement Agency, which are available at participating Maine pharmacies; click here for more [information](#) and a list of pharmacies. As an alternative, residents of municipalities using **ecomaine** for trash disposal may discard medications and prescription drugs in their household trash because our waste-to-energy plant destroys trash at 2,000 degrees (F). As a precaution, the Maine Drug Enforcement Agency recommends first mixing prescription drugs with kitty litter or coffee grounds to prevent removal and misuse.
- **Other home medical waste** Soiled bandages, disposable sheets, and medical gloves should be placed in securely fastened plastic bags before you put them in with your other household trash. For more information, contact:
 - Maine Department of Environmental Protection
 - Biomedical Waste Program, 207-287-2651
 - American Diabetes Association, www.diabetes.org or 207-774-7717
 - Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 1-800-311-3435.