

**San Francisco Department of Public Health
Community Health Equity & Promotion Branch
Implementation Plan for Safe, Unsupervised 24/7 Needle Disposal**

Background

Proper disposal of sharps is a shared responsibility among a number of stakeholders including community clinics, community-based organizations, local government, injection-equipment users, local businesses, pharmacies, and community members. San Francisco Department of Public Health (SFDPH), Community Health Equity & Promotion (CHE&P) Branch plays a key role in the development of such partnerships and is proactive in working with partners to assist in community awareness and implementation.

Promoting safe disposal of used needles and syringes is a key component of CHE&P funded syringe programs. All programs have a written disposal plan approved by SFDPH, including a plan for conducting street sweeps of the areas in which the Syringe Program operates to pick up improperly discarded syringes and other injection equipment. The plan also includes information about the maintenance of publicly available sharps disposal boxes and kiosks. Instances may arise when programs need to do additional sweeps or sweep in new areas based on community concerns related to improper disposal of syringes.

If San Francisco residents find sharps on the street or in other public spaces, they should call the Citywide Hotline at 311. The Department of Public Works (DPW) or Environmental Health will be notified and will deploy a worker to retrieve the sharps and dispose of them properly. DPW is sent out for any calls of less than 25 needles. Environmental Health responds for calls of 25 needles or more. 311 shares monthly data reports with the Syringe Program Liaison at CHE&P to track areas that receive high volume calls about discarded syringes.

The puncture proof wall mount box is a one-time cost of \$216.00 per box. A one year supply of liner inserts is approximately \$300 per year. At this time, there would be no additional cost to DPH.

Rationale

The Mission, Tenderloin, and South of Market neighborhoods have been identified as areas where a high volume of improperly disposed syringes accumulate. To prevent a public health risk to the general community, as well as the DPW maintenance staff, permanent disposal boxes are recommended. Community members, law enforcement, and government officials have expressed support of piloting syringe disposal boxes in areas identified as “hot spots.”

Outdoor public needle disposal containers have been successfully used in cities around the world including in the United States, Canada and Europe. These containers have also been used

in San Francisco in the private sector with successful outcomes. In addition, unsupervised sharps containers have been used in the DPH in public bathrooms with success for years. As part of the CHE&P coordination effort, CHE&P convenes a quarterly meeting of City and community partners that provide syringe disposal to develop and sustain a coordinated and collaborative response through City and community partnerships in order to decrease improperly discarded syringes. In June 2014, this group recommended that disposal boxes be provided in hot spot locations.

Community Engagement

Community input is an important component of the comprehensive syringe disposal plan. The CHE&P syringe program coordinator participates in community meetings to respond to any concerns about discarded syringes. CHE&P staff attend SFPD Community meeting if requested by SFPD to respond to concerns about discarded syringes and to discuss possible solutions with the community. If a box is approved to be placed at a potential site, the community, residents and businesses, in the area are engaged to ensure knowledge and understanding about the pilot proposal.

Community engagement efforts are strengthened by regular communication with local supervisor and community groups of designated hot spots. If local businesses, schools, or community members have been identified as having concerns about disposal box placement, CHE&P Director and Syringe program coordinator attend community meeting to address concerns.

Proposed Plan

To place safe, unsupervised 24/7 needle disposal boxes at locations identified by community stakeholders. The SFDPH CHE&P Branch will purchase the boxes and locks. This container will be maintained by the San Francisco AIDS Foundation. The SFDPH CHE&P Branch already has an existing contract with the SFAF.

This project is being rolled out in three phases to allow for proper of assessment of need and evaluation of success.

Phase I: Early efforts & Assessment of Impact:

- **Large disposal kiosk (date installed: February 2009)**
 - Glide Health Services parking lot, next to 330 Ellis Street at Taylor Street
- **2 disposal boxes placed on Ivy Street (date installed: March 2013)**
 - Outside of 50 Ivy Street, approximately three feet from the entrance to the Tom Waddell Clinic
 - Near 76 Ivy Street, backside of the Arts Commission Gallery, close to Please Touch Garden
- These three boxes have significantly reduced the number of improperly discarded syringes in the area. This data is based on reduced DPW calls and reports by DPH

Facilities staff and Tom Waddell nursing staff. Documentation demonstrates that boxes are maintained weekly. Boxes are secure and functional.

Phase II: Current Efforts & Assessment of Impact

- **2 disposal boxes placed in Tenderloin (date installed: July 2014)**
 - 149 Turk Street (outside San Francisco Drug users Union)
 - 150 Golden Gate (outside St. Anthony's Foundation)
- Data from DPW, SFAF, and community complaints has shown that two boxes have resulted in fewer improperly discarded syringes in the area. Documentation demonstrates that boxes are maintained weekly. Boxes are secure and functional.

Phase III: Assessment of Community Needs

- Based on success of Phase I & II, address current concerns with additional boxes.
- Based on reported concerns and data, identify specific locations in these "hot spots"
 - 16th Street & Capp (outside Native American Health Center-this site has been approved by building management and NAHC Leadership)
 - South of Market (yet to be identified)
 - Tenderloin (additional site to be determined)

Action Steps

1. Identify syringe site locations based on SFDPH CHE&P staff assessment, DPW data, Syringe Programs, community complaints, and discussions with district supervisor, SFPD Captain, and community stakeholders.
2. Communicate with SFPD Police Chief, station captain, district supervisor about potential box location.
3. Attend SFPD Community meeting if requested by Captain to share pilot proposal with community.
4. Develop a Memorandum of Understanding between the SFAF and site locations regarding project implementation and continued management. Review MOU within the CHE&P Branch.
5. Coordinate communication with the SFPD and Supervisor of the district.
6. SFDPH CHE&P Branch will work with SFAF to make contractual adjustments to support the maintenance of the container.
7. Ensure proper signage and biohazard stickers are placed on disposal box.
8. SFAF staff will inspect containers during daily operations and report problems to the SFAF Syringe Services manager for timely intervention (noted over filling, vandalism).
9. SFAF will maintain a log to track maintenance and emptying of boxes. SFDPH CHE&P Syringe Liaison will review monthly logs.

10. In collaboration with the SFDPH CHE&P Branch, SFAF will create procedures for any problems reported during off hours/days.

Communication Plan

Key staff from the SFAF, SFDPH CHE&P Branch, and identified sites shall meet and develop procedure for communication regarding installation, maintenance, or any unusual activity including vandalism of box. During the startup phase CHE&P Community Liaison will act as a liaison between departments and agencies to facilitate the process. Each box has a sticker identifying the need to call 311 for improperly discarded syringes.

1. References/Attachments

*Memorandum of Understanding between the SFAF and the locations of disposal boxes

For any questions or additional information about this policy please contact:

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