

Superior Points

HOW TO SAFELY GET RID OF FOUND NEEDLES

Follow these steps to safely deal with a found needle or any other used, sharp object:

- Do not try to put the cap back on the needle. Do not snap, break or bend any part of the needle.
- Pick the needle up carefully. Use tongs, needle-nosed pliers or a gloved hand. Put the needle in a hard PLASTIC container (peanut butter, pop, water). Seal it tightly and label it 'Needle'. Do not use a glass container as it could break.
- Call Superior Points at 625-8831 or 625-7996 to pick up the needle(s). You can also drop off the container at any yellow needle collection box. Call Superior Points to find one near you.

You can also call Superior Points if you are concerned about found needles. If you leave a message, please give as many details as possible and include a contact phone number for follow-up.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF A NEEDLE POKES ME?

If you have been poked by a found needle or other sharp object that you think has been in contact with blood follow these directions:

1. RIGHT AWAY:

- Wash the skin with soap and water.
- Let the area bleed, if it is bleeding.
- Disinfect with an alcohol swab.
- Cover with a bandage.

2. NEXT:

Contact a health care provider as soon as possible.

NOTE: If a needle sticks you while you are at work, you must report it to your supervisor and follow the procedures set out by your workplace.



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TBDHU.COM



How to safely get rid of found needles

The Superior Points Harm Reduction Program is a service of the Thunder Bay District Health Unit. Staff are involved in a variety of outreach services including:

- Offering needle/syringe exchange and other harm reduction services, including providing condoms and sterile water.
- Providing HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis C prevention education to clients.
- Counselling and referral to other agencies.
- Providing presentations to community agencies and the general public.

To speak with staff or to find out more, please call 625-8831 or 625-7996 on weekdays between 11:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO HAVE A SAFE PLACE TO GET RID OF USED NEEDLES?

- Gives those who inject drugs the opportunity to take responsibility for the safe disposal of their supplies.
- It is safer for city workers who handle the garbage.
- Offers a proactive approach to dealing with the issue.
- Improves the look of a neighbourhood.

CAN I USE CITY GARBAGE COLLECTION OR LANDFILLS TO GET RID OF USED NEEDLES?

No, the city will not accept used needles.

WHERE CAN PEOPLE GET RID OF USED NEEDLES?

- Call the pharmacy where the needles were bought.
- Use the bright yellow needle collection boxes found in various locations around the City. Call 625-8831 or 625-7996 to find one near you.

WHAT HAPPENS TO THE USED NEEDLES ONCE THEY ARE SAFELY COLLECTED?

There are provincial and federal standards that regulate the safe disposal of needles. Superior Points contracts the services of a bio-medical waste contractor who gets rid of the needles for a fee and follows all standards. This same requirement would apply to all pharmacies.

AM I AT RISK IF I TOUCH A FOUND NEEDLE?

Some of the user's blood may still be inside the needle (or other sharp), but viruses in this blood usually die when exposed to the open air, so the risk is very low.

But, there is no way to know how long a needle has been lying where it's found so it is best to be safe. See the next section to learn how to safely get rid of found needles.

The biggest risk is a tetanus infection, which is caused by a germ that can live in the soil for years and be transferred to needles that are thrown away improperly. Most people get immunized against tetanus when they are a child, but this protection needs to be up-dated with a tetanus booster every ten years. For more information about tetanus boosters, please call the Health Unit's Vaccine Preventable Disease program at 625-5971 or 1-866-294-6630, ext. 5971.