

Strategies to Collect Discarded Needles and Syringes in Our Communities



Keeping Ottawa neighbourhoods safe is our collective responsibility. Improperly discarded needles, syringes, crack pipes, and other drug paraphernalia found in our communities will always be an important priority. In an effort to promote community safety, Ottawa Public Health (OPH), along with numerous City and community partners, has implemented a variety of measures to address this issue. Through these various measures, it is important to highlight that the vast majority of needles used in the community are properly disposed (approximately 99% each year).

These measures include:

- **Needle Drop Box Program**

- It is against the law to dispose of your needles, crack pipes (glass stems), or other sharps in the garbage or recycling. As a result, OPH created and administers the Needle Drop Box Program. This program provides Ottawa residents with appropriate, secure and tamper-proof drop boxes located at approximately 80 locations across the City to allow for the safe and convenient disposal of sharps.



- **City Services** - OPH works with other City departments through the City Contact Centre 3-1-1 to respond to requests for the pick-up of improperly discarded used needles. The City makes an effort to respond to all needle retrieval requests within one hour. If you have picked up used needles or other drug paraphernalia in your neighbourhood, please report these finds to OPH at needlereporting@ottawa.ca.

- **The Needle Hunters Program** - This program is a major component of the City of Ottawa's corporate response to improperly discarded needles, crack pipes, and other drug paraphernalia found in our communities.



The Needle Hunters are a group of people who proactively search for and dispose of these items in priority neighbourhoods across the City. Their clean up routes are constantly monitored and adjusted in order to target areas of particular need.

- **Pharmacies involved with the Take it Back! Program**

Used needles, syringes, glass stems can be taken to a Take it Back! partner by phoning ahead to the retailer before returning an item.



- **Harm reduction programs** - OPH operates the **Site Needle Syringe Program**. Our Public Health professionals educate all people who use on how to dispose of needles safely and the risks of failing to do so. We provide them with sharps containers and information on various disposal locations, and also encourage them to return their supplies directly to the program. OPH has approximately 30 harm reduction partners across the City.



More information on the City's comprehensive needle retrieval program can be found on OttawaPublicHealth.ca.