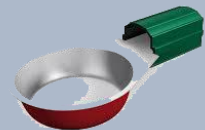




Barefoot in the Park



Safe Needle Disposal Toolkit

Cowichan Valley Region, BC, Canada



The 2017 Safe Needle Disposal Toolkit is an updated version of the original version published in 2009 and is based on the collaboration and work of the Safe Needle Disposal Working Group, which was a subcommittee of the Cowichan Valley Regional District's Community Safety Advisory Committee. Partners of this regional strategy included representatives from; Canadian Mental Health Association, City of Duncan, Cowichan District Hospital, Cowichan Valley Regional District, District of North Cowichan, Mental Health and Addictions VIHA, NARSF Programs Ltd., RCMP, Safer Futures School District 79, Social Planning Cowichan, and the Vancouver Island Health Authority.

These partners collaborated to identify and pursue improvements to the health and safety of our community.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Much of the content in the 2009 version of the toolkit was previously published in the Safe Edmonton Safe Needle Disposal Toolkit. Many thanks to them for their amazing groundwork in creating safer communities.

Visit www.edmonton.ca/Safedmonton for more information on their projects.

For more information please contact:

The Community Safety Advisory Commission
(CSAC) 250-746-2561

This document is available for download at
www.cvrld.bc.ca



Table of Contents

Steps to Safe Needle Disposal page 12

Needle Use in the Cowichan Valley.....	4
A Glossary in Pictures.....	5
Lancets.....	5
Blue Plastic Vials.....	5
Crack Pipes.....	5
Needle Clips.....	6
Disposal Boxes.....	6
Sharps Containers.....	6
Who Can Get Hurt?.....	7
What are the Risks?.....	8
Tetanus.....	8
Staphylococcus Aureus...	9
HIV/Aids.....	9
Hepatitis.....	10
Unsafe Needle Disposal.....	11
Safe Needle Disposal.....	12
When to Call for Help?.....	13
What to do if Poked by a Needle?.....	13
Places to take Needles.....	14
Map of 24 hour drop box locations..	15
Sharps Pick Up Service.....	16
Resources and Information.....	16



Needle use in the Cowichan Valley

- People use needles for many different purposes. There are many medical conditions that involve the use of needles. Diabetes is the most common. People with conditions like cancer and arthritis use needles to control pain. Some people use needles to inject illegal drugs.
- People who use injection drugs have said they do not intend to harm other people in the community when they are discarding used needles. Many will throw out needles safely if there are safe choices available.
- Everyone who uses needles has the same need to get rid of their used needles safely. With safe disposal, no one gets hurt accidentally.



Choices for Disposing Needles

- Many pharmacies take back used needles from their customers.
- The Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) Sharps Pick Up Team takes used needles 24 hours 7 days a week and can provide empty needle boxes for collection. Call 250-732-3330.
- CVI Harm Reduction Services offers free needle exchange services for injection drug users and provide empty needle boxes for collection for Duncan and Lake Cowichan on Tuesdays 12pm-8pm and Ladysmith Fridays 1pm – 10pm and Saturdays 6pm – 10pm. Call 1-844-482-4239 or 250-510-3637.
- Public washrooms at the Island Savings Centre and those adjacent to the Duncan Train Station have needle disposal boxes in each of the washroom stalls.
- Needle Disposal boxes are located at various parks and public areas within the core area of Duncan (see map of drop box locations)
- Margaret Moss Public Health Unit will take used needles and provide empty needle boxes for collection 8:30-4:30 Mon – Fri.
- CVRD recycling depots also receive needles for disposal. Bings Creek Solid Waste Management Complex at 3900 Drinkwater Road (off Hwy 18), Peerless Road Recycling Drop off Depot in Ladysmith at 10830 Peerless Road, and Meade Creek Recycling Drop-off Depot in Lake Cowichan at 8855 Youbou Road.
- The Cowichan Valley Food Bank at 5810 Garden Street takes used needles.



A Glossary in Pictures



The syringes and needles used at home or by injection drug users look the same as the syringes and needles you see in a doctor's office. Needles are also called "sharps" and syringes, needles and lancets are known as "needle debris".

What does a Lancet look like?



People with diabetes use a lancet – a very small needle – to prick their finger to draw blood. They do this several times each week to check the level of sugar in their blood. The needle sits inside a holder, or a lancing device.



What are those plastic vials?

Sterile water may be used in the preparation of injection drugs and come in small blue, pink or clear plastic vials.



What does a crack pipe look like?

People in the Cowichan Valley may also find crack pipes on the street. Crack pipes should be treated the same as needle debris and disposed of in a safe manner.



What does a needle clip device look like?

Diabetics will use a needle clip device to break off the metal needle of their insulin injections. Its opening is only large enough for the needle to fit through. The sides push together to clip the needle from the syringe. The purpose is to seal the needles in a container so that no one else gets accidentally poked.



What does a needle disposal box look like?

These boxes are used for collecting used needles. Needle boxes are mounted and found in various locations in the Cowichan Valley.



What is a sharps container?

A sharps container is made of hard plastic with a sealable opening at the top. It is especially made for safely holding used needles, syringes and lancets. Sharps containers or “biohazard containers”, come in various sizes and can hold a large number of needles. Various pharmacies, public health agencies and organizations have sharps containers available and often do not have a cost for purchase.



Who can get poked accidentally?

People using needles need a way to throw them out after they are finished using them. Without wanting to harm anyone else, they may throw the needles in the garbage or on the ground if they don't see an easy way to get rid of them safely or if they have not been educated about safe disposal.

How could this happen?

- A person who tries to put the cap back on a needle can easily get poked.
- A curious child in a playground can pick up a needle tucked under a bush and get poked.
- A person looking through garbage for pop cans and empty bottles can get poked if someone tossed a needle in the bin.
- A parks maintenance person can get poked if there are needles hidden in a flowerbed or under a shrub in a park.
- A person who picks up a needle while walking along the street or an alley can get poked if it is not handled properly. Carrying loose needles without a container could lead to an accidental injury.
- A worker who is cleaning public washrooms or hotel rooms can get poked if needles are hidden in tissue paper or wastebaskets.
- A child attracted to something shiny or an adult reaching under a heating vent in the hallway of an apartment building can get poked by a needle pushed underneath.
- A city waste collector can get poked by a needle sticking out of a garbage bag. Even needles in food containers can poke out if the container gets crushed.
- In addition to people getting hurt, an animal can get poked wandering through bushes where needles are hidden.



These are just some of the examples of situations where people could get hurt. Safe needle disposal keeps our communities clean and safe for everyone.



What are the Risks?

We know picking up other people's garbage with bare hands is not a good idea because it's an easy way to spread infection. Needles are like other garbage. Picking up needles with your bare hands is a way to get infected if you have an open cut. When a person finishes using a needle, some of that person's blood may still be inside the needle or syringe. If a needle pokes you, you could get sick as well.

Most people will not get sick by picking up or by being poked by a used needle. When viruses in needles are exposed to the open air, viruses usually die. There is no way to know how long a needle has been lying where you found it, so it best to be safe.

If you are accidentally poked by a needle:

- You may get Tetanus
- You may get a Staphylococcus Aureus infection
- You are at risk of getting hepatitis B or C, but the risk is negligible
- You are very unlikely to get HIV because the virus does not live in the air for more than a few minutes.¹



What is Tetanus?

Tetanus is a serious disease, caused by poison from tetanus bacteria. It attacks muscle nerves and can be fatal.

- You can get the bacteria from needles that are not clean (sterilized)
- You can get Tetanus when you have an open cut and you touch bacteria in soil, feces, or rusted metal.

You can prevent Tetanus ...

- By getting immunized
- By using clean needles
- By not touching feces and rusted metal with your bare hands

Tetanus can be treated with medication and may include a long period of recovery.

¹ BC center for excellence in HIV/AIDS; Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network



What is Staphylococcus Aureus?

Staphylococcus Aureus (Staph) is a group of bacteria that infects the body. Over 30 different types of Staphylococci can infect humans, but most infections are caused by Staphylococcus Aureus. In the majority of cases, the bacteria do not cause disease. However, damage to the skin or other injury may allow the bacteria to overcome the natural protective mechanism of the body, leading to infection.

- Staph can be spread from one person to another through casual contact to through contaminated objects. Staph infection can enter the body through an open sore or cut.
- Staph is commonly spread from the hands of someone who has it. This could be anyone in a health care setting or in the community.

You can prevent Staph infections...

- By practicing good hygiene.
- By washing your hands frequently.
- By covering wounds, and not sharing towels, needles, or razors.

Staph infections are treated with antibiotics.

What is HIV/AIDS?

HIV (or human immunodeficiency virus) is a chronic disease that weakens the immune system. Without proper treatment, the immune system can become too weak to fight off serious illness. The risk of contracting HIV from a needle is extremely unlikely.

- HIV is found in all body fluids of an infected person. It is spread through blood, semen, vaginal secretions and breast milk.
- HIV is spread by having unprotected sex.
- HIV is spread by sharing needles.
- The risk of contracting HIV from a needle poke injury is extremely unlikely as the bacteria dies within a few minutes of exposure to air.

You can greatly reduce the risk of getting or spreading HIV...

- If you practice safe sex by using a condom
- If you use clean needles every time

There is no cure for HIV at this time, but with proper care most people can live a long and healthy life.



What is Hepatitis?

Hepatitis is a disease of the liver, caused by a virus.

- Hepatitis A is spread through contaminated food or water.
- Hepatitis B and C are spread from blood or body fluids of one person who has hepatitis to the blood or body fluids of another person.
- You can get hepatitis if you share needles with someone who carries the virus.
- You can get the disease if you get poked by a needle with infected blood on it, but the risk is low.
- You can get the disease if you have sex with someone who is infected. The risk is low.

You can prevent getting or passing hepatitis to someone else...

- If you use clean needles every time.
- If you practice safe sex by using a condom.
- By getting the Hepatitis B vaccine.

Most people recover completely if they get sick with Hepatitis B. There is no vaccine to prevent Hepatitis C. Only 3 of every 10 people with Hepatitis C know they have the disease and most carry the virus for a long time. Complex drug treatment works for some people.



Unsafe Ways to Dispose of Needles

	Why is it unsafe?
<p><i>Putting needles in the garbage.</i></p> <p>X</p>	<p>Waste collectors can get poked if the needles are loose or in a container. Containers can get crushed and the needles come through</p>
<p><i>Putting needles in the recycling bin.</i></p> <p>X</p>	<p>Waste management workers sort all the recycled items we put in blue bins by hand. A worker could get poked by a needle.</p>
<p><i>Putting needles down the toilet or down the sewer.</i></p> <p>X</p>	<p>The needles go into the sewer system and then into the ocean. City staff working in the drains could get poked and it is environmentally unclean.</p>
<p><i>Putting needles on the ground or under a bush.</i></p> <p>X</p>	<p>A child, adult, or pet could get scratched or poked. City cleaning staff could get poked.</p>
<p><i>Tucking needles into places they won't be seen.</i></p> <p>X</p>	<p>A person cleaning, such as a janitor or housekeeping staff, could get hurt.</p>



Safe Needle Disposal

CHILDREN...

You should leave the needle where it is. Call an adult for help.

ADULTS...

If you see a discarded needle, you can choose to dispose of it yourself or you can call for help. You do not need to be afraid if you are cautious, as the risks of injury or infection are low.

Steps to Safe Needle Disposal

Step 1

Do not try to put the cap back on the needle. Do not snap, break or bend any part of the needle.

Step 2

Pick the needle up carefully with tongs or gloved hands.

Step 3

Put the needle in a hard plastic container and tightly seal and label it.

Step 4

Take the needle(s) to one of the 24 hour drop box locations (see map on page 15) or to a CVRD recycling depot at Bings Creek, Peerless Road or Meade Creek or to other sharps disposal locations listed on pages 14 - 15.*

* Check directly with CVRD Recycling Depots and various disposal locations for service hours



If you are not comfortable picking up needles and need more information, call CMHA Sharps Pick Up Team at 250-732-3330 or CVI Harm Reduction Outreach at 1-844-482-4239 or 250-510-3637.



When do I call for help?

- If you are too nervous to pick it up.
- If you see multiple needles in a pile, for example, in a stairwell or behind a dumpster.
- If you see broken needles scattered on the ground.
- If you have no way of taking the needle in a strong container to a safe place.

What should you do if you get poked by a needle?

If a needle or other sharp object has poked you that you suspect has been in contact with blood or a body fluid containing blood:

1

IMMEDIATELY:

**Wash the affected part with soap and warm water;
Disinfect with alcohol swab; apply band aid.**

2

**Call Island Health Communicable Disease
Prevention (weekdays 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.)
at:**

**1-866-665-6626 or go to the hospital
emergency room for assessment.**

3

**If the injury happens when you are at work,
be sure to tell your immediate supervisor**

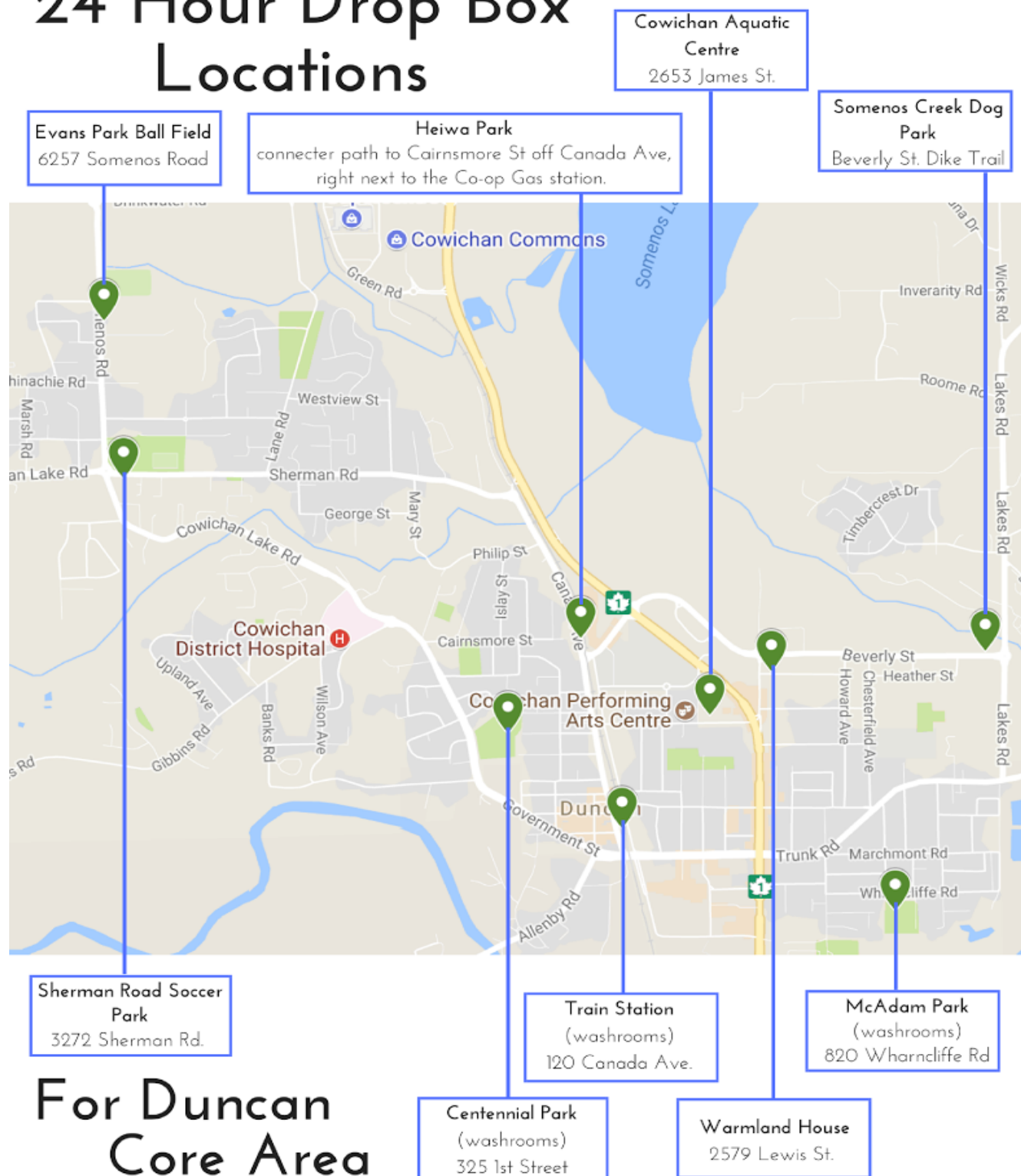


Places to take needles

<p>Needles can be dropped off at one of the three recycling depots, North Cowichan/Bings Creek, Ladysmith/Peerless Road, or Lake Cowichan/Meade Creek.</p> <p>Some Pharmacists will accept sharp containers for disposal. Please call your local pharmacy to ask about disposal options.</p> <p>Needles can be taken to various 24-hour access drop box locations in the core area of Duncan (<i>see map on page 15 for location listings</i>)</p> <p>If the needle(s) are on public property in other areas, you can call your municipality to notify their public work crews.</p> <p>For more information on Safe Needle Disposal Drop off at CVRD recycling depots, please call the CVRD Recycling Hotline at 250-746-2540</p> <p>Island Health, Duncan Mental health and Substance Use 71 Government St. Duncan OR 3088 Gibbons Road, Duncan 250-737-2007 8:30 am - 4:30 pm</p> <p>Cowichan Tribes Ts'ewultun Health Centre 5768 Allenby Rd, Duncan 250-746-6184 8:30 am -4:30 pm</p>	<p>CVRD Recycling and Waste 250-746-2540</p> <p>Bings Creek 3900 Drinkwater Road, Duncan open daily from 8 am - 5 pm</p> <p>Peerless/Ladysmith 10830 Westdowne Road, Ladysmith Summer Hours (April 1 to October 31): Wednesday through Sunday, 9 am - 5 pm Winter Hours (November 1 to March 31): Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday only 9 am - 5 pm</p> <p>Meade Creek/Youbou 8800 North Shore Road, Lake Cowichan Summer Hours (April 1 to October 31): Tues, Wed, Sat and Sun, 9 am - 5 pm Winter Hours (November 1 to March 31): Wed, Sat and Sun only 9 am - 5 pm</p> <p>Warmland House 2579 Lewis St, Duncan 250-715-1132 gate open 8 am – 5 pm; after hours use drop box located just outside the gate.</p> <p>Margaret Moss Health Unit 675 Canada Ave, Duncan, BC 250-709-3050, 8:30 am -4:30 pm.</p> <p>Chemainus Health Care Centre 9909 Esplanade St, Chemainus 250-737-2040, 7:30 am -10:30 am. MUST BE IN SHARPS CONTAINER.</p>
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24 Hour Drop Box Locations



Sharps Pick up Service Providers

Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA)

Sharps Pick Up Team

7 Days a week

250-732-3330 text or phone

CVI Harm Reduction Services

Duncan and area, Tues 3 pm – 8 pm

Ladysmith, Fri & Sat 4:30 pm – 9:30 pm

1-844-482-4239 OR 250-510-3637 text or phone

Resources and Information

NARSF Programs

<http://www.narsf.org/>

250-754-2773

Cowichan Community Policing

<http://www.warmlandcops.com/>

250-701-9145

Island Health, Communicable Diseases Prevention and Control Services

<http://www.viha.ca/mho/disease/communicable-disease-services.htm>

1-866-665-6626

BC Health Link

811

<https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/>

AIDS Vancouver Island

250-384-2366

www.AVI.org



Margaret Moss Public Health Unit, Duncan

250-709-3050

www.viha.ca

Ladysmith Public Health Unit

250-739-5777

www.viha.ca

Lake Cowichan Public Health Unit

250-749-6878

www.viha.ca

British Columbia Centre for Disease Control

604-707-2400

www.bccdc.ca

“What is HIV/AIDS?” Public Health Agency of

Canada: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/hiv-aids.html>

Hepatitis C Information

www.hepinfo.ca

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