

# Penticton Sharps Disposal Strategy

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Royal Canadian Mounted Police

Gendarmerie royale du Canada



## 1.0 Background

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Needles and needle debris are a challenging issue for Penticton, however the city is not alone. Strategies to ensure that individuals and communities are as safe and healthy as possible have been undertaken across the globe.

Needles are used by people with specific health conditions, such as diabetes and arthritis. They are also used by people with specific addictions. Ensuring that all people who use needles can access safe disposal, and that stray needles, also called sharps, are dealt with promptly and safely is one of the goals of a ***Sharps Disposal Strategy***.

This document is intended to define a community strategy for the location, collection and disposal of sharps in Penticton as one response to decrease the discarded needles found in both public and private spaces. This strategy is part of a shared community effort to promote harm reduction and enhance safety.

### The goals of the *Sharps Disposal Strategy* are:

- Raise community awareness about needle safety
- Reduce the number of discarded needles in public spaces
- Provide more options for the safe disposal of needles
- Reduce risk and prevent injury to the public who find discarded needles
- Empower community to work together and take action towards a cleaner and safer city



## 2.0 Community Partners

A number of community partners are involved in supporting this strategy. The following outlines who they are and their roles:

**Interior Health** – related to this strategy, Interior Health provides mental health and substance use services, operates the *Martin Street Outreach Clinic*, and provides harm reduction services to the community. Within this strategy they are a partner in supplying sharps boxes, take home naloxone kits, and the collection and disposal of sharps at select health offices.

**OneSky Community Resources** – provides a variety of social services for children, youth, families and seniors. With funding from Interior Health, their *Harm Reduction Program* coordinates community education and take home naloxone training, provides harm reduction supplies, and organizes a peer-based outreach program. Within this strategy they are a partner in supplying drop boxes, public awareness and a *OneSky Crew* that monitors and collects sharps for disposal.

**South Okanagan Women in Need Society** – provides social services offering shelter, safety and support to help individuals recognize, understand and overcome the impacts of abuse. They operate a *Mobile Outreach Program* that provides harm reduction supplies, overdose prevention, information and referrals. This team provides harm reduction supplies and collects and disposes of harm reduction material as part of their mobile outreach.

**City of Penticton, Fire Department** – provides a wide range of services to our community, including fire suppression, pre-hospital medical emergencies, motor vehicle incidents, industrial accidents, public education and all types of specialized rescues. Residents can call the fire department directly for assistance with the clean-up of a large collection of needles or needle debris.

**City of Penticton, Bylaw Services** – works to promote compliance with the City's bylaws and regulations. This is accomplished through awareness, education, enforcement, public relations, and other programs that promote peace and the safe use of public spaces. In support of this strategy, the Bylaws team removes sharps as part of their day to day services.



**City of Penticton, Parks** – maintains public parks spaces throughout the City. Their work includes park maintenance and collecting waste, including sharps they may encounter as part of their day to day activities.

**City of Penticton, Occupational Health & Safety Department** – provides training and resources to employees to keep them safe in the workplace. They provide sharps containers and training to Parks and Bylaw crews.

**RCMP** – support the community from a crime prevention and enforcement perspective promoting public safety. Based on calls for service or items that may be confiscated, the RCMP may encounter sharps and have sharp bins located at their detachment and in police vehicles for safe disposal by their members.

**School District 67 (Okanagan Skaha)** – supports approximately 5,700 students in 18 public schools. The District's teachers work with school support staff and community partners to educate students on various social and health issues. Their employees that maintain school properties, including custodians and grounds maintenance, also encounter and safely dispose of sharps as part of their day to day activities.

**Total Restoration** – is a leading disaster restoration company that provides 24/7 services to insurance companies, business owners, property managers and homeowners. They support this strategy by providing technical advice to the **OneSky** Crew who monitor and collect sharps from community drop boxes.

**Pathways Addictions Resource Centre** – offers a variety of outpatient counselling services for people and families dealing with substance use and addictions. As a proponent of harm reduction, Pathways hosts a methadone clinic and provides training and distribution of naloxone. In support of this strategy they undertake health promotion and public education in schools and broader community.

**Downtown Penticton Association** – markets the city centre on behalf of 650 businesses and provides services that target downtown image, cleanliness, safety, transportation, and parking. They also host events and promote downtown as a great place to work, shop, and live. In support of this strategy they promote a safer city centre and public education with business members and broader community.



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**PATHWAYS**  
Addictions Resource Centre



### 3.0 Sharps – Drop Boxes & Locations

Informed by consultation with partners, other municipalities and residents using harm reduction supplies, the **Sharps Disposal Strategy** will deploy 3 types of community drop boxes for sharps throughout Penticton in 2018.

- Interior drop boxes secured to walls in public washrooms
- Outdoor drop boxes secured to poles or fencing in specific high use locations
- A stand-alone sharps kiosk in support of a biomedical waste disposal location

OneSky Community Resources, in partnership with the City of Penticton's Occupational Health & Safety Department, will take the lead with rolling out the drop boxes in 2018.

#### PUBLIC WASHROOMS Indoor Community Drop Boxes

Deploy interior drop boxes mounted to walls in public washrooms at:

- Gyro Park (Lakeshore Dr. & Martin St)
- Okanagan Lake Park (East of Lakeside Resort)
- OneSky Community Resources (330 Ellis St)
- Oonakane Friendship Centre (146 Ellis St)
- Pathways Resource Addictions Centre (996 Main St)
- Rotary Park (The Peach on Lakeshore Dr)
- Public Library (785 Main St)
- Skaha Lake Park (Skaha Lake Rd & Parkview St)



## 3.0 Sharps – Drop Boxes & Locations

### OUTDOOR LOCATIONS

#### Outdoor Community Drop Boxes

Deploy outdoor drop boxes secured to poles/fences near:

- Creekside Trail (Nanaimo Ave & Van Horne St)
- Fairhaven Housing (2670 Skaha Lake Rd)
- Industrial Avenue Trail (South of Wholesale Club)
- Marina Way (entrance to Esplanade trail)
- Martin Street Outreach Clinic (437 Martin S)
- Okanagan Lake Park (East end, past the dog beach)
- Penticton United Church (696 Main St)
- Public Library (785 Main St)
- Rose Garden Walkway (1099 Lakeshore Dr)
- Shanghai Lane (200 Block Main Street lane– public washroom exterior)

### BIOMEDICAL WASTE LOCATION

#### Sharps Kiosk

Deploy a sharps kiosk for a secondary ‘end of line’ biomedical waste disposal location. *Stericycle*, a company who collects sharps monthly from the Penticton Health Centre under an *Interior Health* contract, will dispose of waste from this location.

- City Yards at 616 Okanagan Avenue East

**Do you want to help?** We encourage businesses and organizations to join this community effort to safely dispose of sharps and enhance community safety. Please contact Lisa Birch, **OneSky’s** Harm Reduction Worker, at [lisa.birch@oneskycommunity.com](mailto:lisa.birch@oneskycommunity.com) to learn more.



## 4.0 Sharps – Collection

A number of community partners safely collect and dispose of sharps as part of their day-to-day activities, such as the Penticton Fire Department, RCMP, Interior Health, and City of Penticton Parks and Bylaws. In further support of this community strategy, three key partners will work with the public to safely dispose of sharps.

***OneSky Crew***– Members of a peer-based outreach program will remove needles and empty community drop boxes through neighbourhood sweeps, scheduled collections and awareness activities with peers. They can be reached at **250-487-3356**.

***SOWINS' Mobile Outreach Team***– Team members remove needles and sharps during weekly outreach and through educational activities and a needle exchange program.

***City of Penticton***– The general public who encounter a large group of needles, or do not feel safe disposing of a used needle, can call the City of Penticton at **250-490-2400**.



## 5.0 Sharps – Waste Management

Sharps and sharps containers are ultimately disposed of as biomedical waste through a government contract with **Stericycle**, a compliance company that specializes in collecting and disposing of medical waste, pharmaceuticals, and hazardous waste.

Community partners that retrieve sharps to promote public health and safety will ultimately drop off biomedical waste at one of two city locations that have a **Stericycle** contract:

- 1) Public Health Centre- 740 Carmi Avenue
- 2) City Yards- 616 Okanagan Avenue East

Individual citizens can also dispose of sharps. Ideally, people using needles or lancets have a small household sharps container that is designed for disposing of these sharps. These are available and collected at most pharmacies, who take back needles from their customers.

People are advised to place all needles and other sharps in a sharps disposal container immediately after they have been used. This will reduce the risk of needle sticks, cuts, and punctures from loose sharps. Also sharps disposal containers should be kept out of reach of children and pets and NEVER reuse sharps disposal containers.

Additionally, individual citizens can support a clean and safe Penticton by collecting and discarding of sharps at community drop boxes.

The **Sharps Disposal Strategy** has developed a “Safe Disposal of Needles” rack card for community awareness. The resource outlines safety steps a person can take if they find an improperly discarded needle. It also provides helpful information such as the locations of community drop boxes, phone numbers and a website link for more information.

## 6.0 Sharps – Tracking Results

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It is important to measure the success of the *Sharps Disposal Strategy*, however, it is not reasonable to count every needle for all parties involved. The *OneSky* Crew and *SOWINS* Mobile Outreach Team will use a simple tracking form that records information on locations, bins, visits and number of needles collected. This will help ensure that community drop boxes are located in optimal settings, people are aware of their availability and that bins are being maintained.

The *RCMP*, *Fire Department* and *Bylaws Services* also have internal records on service calls. They can help identify ‘hot spots’ for needle debris and future locations for drop boxes.

As part of their harm reduction efforts in community, *OneSky* will coordinate analysis and reporting to inform future planning. Research projects in other Canadian municipalities show that providing sharps disposal units is effective for reducing the number of needles discarded in public spaces. As the use of new sharps boxes rises, there is a corresponding decline in service calls and/or hot spots. Research from a Canadian study undertaken by McGill University illustrates this impact is most likely for public spaces within 200m of a sharps drop box. ([www.ijdp.org/article/S0955-3959\(09\)00110-8/fulltext](http://www.ijdp.org/article/S0955-3959(09)00110-8/fulltext))



## 7.0 Sharps – Community Awareness

In further support of implementing the *Sharps Disposal Strategy* the following public education activities will be undertaken by partners throughout 2018:

- Presentation to City Council
- Media release and news articles after the drop boxes are located in community settings
- Development, printing and distribution of a *Safe Disposal of Needles* rack card
- Development and online distribution of a *Penticton Sharps Disposal Strategy*
- Publish the locations of community drop boxes in key community resource guides
- Information related to sharps disposal services provided on key websites
- Information and training provided to relevant employees and volunteers
- Peer-based outreach and education



## 8.0 Acknowledgments

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