

FINAL BILL REPORT

ESHB 2401

C 165 L 94
Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Disposing of residential sharps waste.

By House Committee on Environmental Affairs (originally sponsored by Representatives Linville, Horn, Rust, Quall, L. Johnson, Foreman, Wood and J. Kohl).

House Committee on Environmental Affairs
Senate Committee on Ecology & Parks

Background: There are no state requirements for the disposal of hypodermic needles generated at a household.

Rules adopted by the Utilities and Transportation Commission require a solid waste collection company to collect hypodermic needles (sharps waste) in a leak-proof, rigid plastic container that is sealed and marked "biohazardous" or "biomedical." These rules apply only to clinics, hospitals, and other commercial facilities.

Some private solid waste collection companies currently collect sharps waste containers from households as an additional service to normal garbage collection service. Some pharmacies have developed programs to accept sharps waste if it is stored within a specified hard plastic container. Other companies allow home needle users to return sharps waste containers through the mail.

Summary: A person using a public or private solid waste collection company to dispose of sharps waste must contain the used needles in a red, sealed, leak-proof, plastic container. Containers meeting these specifications are defined as "sharps waste containers."

Beginning July 1, 1995, it is illegal to dispose of sharps waste or sharps waste containers into a solid waste container if a solid waste company offers collection service for sharps waste containers. It is also illegal to dispose of sharps waste or sharps waste containers into recycling receptacles regardless of service availability. It is not illegal to dispose of sharps waste containers into a household garbage receptacle if the Utilities and Transportation Commission requires this action to prevent theft of the sharps waste containers.

A person who intentionally and illegally disposes of sharps waste or a sharps waste container is subject to a maximum \$50 penalty. Local health departments may enforce the penalty provisions but are directed to use education for the first two infractions and monetary penalties for subsequent infractions.

Persons disposing of sharps waste through the mail or through a pharmacy return program are not required to use household collection services. Public or private companies collecting sharps waste separately from garbage must provide information to customers on the availability and cost of the service as well as options to the service.

Pharmacy return programs cannot be designated as a solid waste handling facility and do not need a permit to accept sharps waste containers. Pharmacy return programs are required to register, at no cost, with the Department of Ecology.

Votes on Final Passage:

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|--------|----|---|-------------------|
| House | 94 | 0 | |
| Senate | 46 | 1 | (Senate amended) |
| House | 95 | 0 | (House concurred) |

Effective Date: June 9, 1994
July 1, 1995 (Section 3)