

**SENATE BILL REPORT**

**ESHB 2401**

**AS REPORTED BY COMMITTEE ON ECOLOGY & PARKS, FEBRUARY 23, 1994**

**Brief Description:** Disposing of residential sharps waste.

**SPONSORS:** 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**

**Majority Report:** Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Fraser, Chairman; Deccio, McCaslin, Moore, Morton, Sutherland and Talmadge.

**Staff:** Kari Guy (786-7464)

**Hearing Dates:** February 21, 1994; February 23, 1994

**BACKGROUND:**

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

The Department of Ecology recommends that sharps be disposed of in plastic, two-liter bottles, marked with warning sticker. Approximately 25 percent of insulin users dispose of residential sharps through this method. Eight solid waste collection companies currently collect sharps waste containers from households as an additional service to normal garbage collection service. These providers currently serve approximately .07 percent of insulin users in Washington. 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:**

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 or recycling 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.

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.

**SUMMARY OF PROPOSED COMMITTEE AMENDMENT:**

Solid waste collection companies, as well as biomedical waste collection companies, may transport sharps containers from a pharmacy.

Local health departments are granted the authority to enforce the penalty provisions of the bill.

Wording is removed that would have allowed the placement of sharps containers in recycling receptacles to reduce the potential for theft.

**Appropriation:** none

**Revenue:** none

**Fiscal Note:** available

**TESTIMONY FOR:**

The bill will promote worker safety for solid waste and recycling workers. Prohibition against disposal of sharps in solid waste receptacles should not be contingent upon the availability of source-separated collection.

**TESTIMONY AGAINST:** None

**TESTIFIED:** PRO: J.P. Jones, WRRRA; Gordy Walgren, WA State Pharmacy Association; Kelly Guenther, NAPCOR