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Recycling of "Sharps" Now Available Locally

By Sophie Braccini



Battalion Chief Darrell Lee in front of the recycling bin at MOFD Station 41 Photo Sophie Braccini

Diablo Boulevard, or the Orinda Police Department.

The second option consists of disposing of sharps from individual homes by mailing special containers to WM's MedWaste Tracker™. The number to call to purchase the container is (925) 935-8900. Once they receive the container, residents fill it with sharps and drop it off at the post office or call the U.S. Postal Service for pick-up. The cost of the containers varies depending on size and starts around \$25.

"The Home-Generated Medical Sharps Disposal Program was designed to provide a convenient and safe disposal opportunity for individuals in our community," said CCCSWA vice-chair and Moraga Mayor Karen Mendonca, "We are delighted to have the full cooperation and support of the fire and police departments in making this option available to Lamorinda citizens."

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The term "Home Generated Sharps" (HGS) is used to describe needles, syringes with needles, and disposable lancets used to either collect a sample or inject medication into a human or animal. They are all considered medical waste. The Central Contra Costa Solid Waste Authority (CCCSWA) and Allied Waste Services have devised convenient ways for Lamorinda residents to comply with the law that now prohibits putting sharps in the trash or recycle bins.

"Use of home generated sharps is predicted to increase rapidly in the coming years, due to the rise in the incidence of diabetes and other maintenance-requiring diseases. Additionally, more people are using sharps to deliver medications to their pets," says CCCWA Program Manager Lois Courchaine, "Until now, Clayton, Walnut Creek and San Ramon were the only alternatives for proper disposal." Her services noted that too many sharps were trashed or improperly recycled. "The Pacific Rim Recycling facility in Benicia experiences both containerized and loose sharps crossing their sorting line regularly, exposing their line workers to potential health hazards," she says.

The solution is two-fold. The first option is to place the sharps in an authorized sharps container (available at CVS) and place them in the collection receptacle installed at the Moraga Orinda Fire District (MOFD) station 41 in Moraga, or the Lafayette Fire station on Mt