

Sharon Services for the Disposal of Medical Sharps, Medication and Mercury Thermometers

Many items, including mercury containing devices, medical “sharps”, and drugs should not be disposed of through your municipal trash service. If left in your trash, these materials may cause significant injury to persons or harm to the water supply and environment. The Town of Sharon maintains services to facilitate the proper and safe disposal of potentially hazardous materials.

Mercury Thermometers

Thermometers containing mercury should not be disposed of in the trash. Mercury is a potent neurotoxin that may cause damage to the nervous system. Mercury can become rapidly dispersed in air within your home upon release, exposing residents to mercury vapors. When placed in the trash, mercury can also contaminate groundwater, fish and other wildlife.

Mercury thermometers may be brought to the Sharon Health Department and exchanged for a digital thermometer, or brought directly to the Department of Public Works. Please place any broken thermometers in a sealed plastic bag before disposal.

Mercury that has been released from a thermometer or other device (e.g., older blood pressure cuffs, which contain substantial quantities of mercury), should be removed carefully. For more information on mercury clean up go to http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/mercury/docs/Residential_Hg_Spill_Cleanup.pdf.

More information on the health effects of mercury may be found at the websites of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) <https://www.epa.gov/mercury/health-effects-exposures-mercury>, and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) <http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs/tf.asp?id=113&tid=24>.

Medical Sharps

Medical sharps, including hypodermic needles and lancets, cannot be disposed of in municipal waste. A regulation passed on 2012 (105 CMR 480.000) by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health prohibits this practice. Sharon residents may bring medical sharps to the Sharon Fire Department for disposal between 8:00 am and 6:00 pm daily at the residential sharps disposal kiosk. Red “biohazard” boxes should be used; however, sharps may also be placed in an opaque (not clear) puncture-proof container such as a detergent or bleach bottle. The container must be sealed and labeled “Do Not Recycle”. If no one is present at the station, do not leave sharps outside the Fire Department, and return when assistance is available.

Pharmaceutical Disposal

Pharmaceuticals should be disposed of properly to prevent contamination of water resources and illicit drug use. More than 3,000 prescription medications are available in the United States, and many more over the counter medications are purchased regularly. These medications should not be disposed of in municipal trash, and should not be flushed into septic systems or sewers where they can contaminate the groundwater. Please bring any unused or outdated pharmaceuticals to the Sharon Police

Department lobby, where a medication disposal kiosk is available at all hours. Prescriptions, over-the-counter medications, samples, pet medications, ointments and liquid medications in a glass or leak-proof container will be accepted.