
Finding a Syringe: What to Do

Finding a syringe in your garden is a scary thing. Hopefully, you never do. But *if* you do, here are some options for you to dispose of it safely.

Don't pick it up yet! Wait. You can:

Call 311, Monday through Friday, between 8:30 AM and 4:30 PM, to arrange safe pick up and disposal by the city.

Call the police department. According to the Buffalo Police Department, you can call 911 and they will pick it up. However, if this doesn't work, you can...

Try the fire department. This has worked for at least one garden. The local fire house sent someone out with their sharps container to safely dispose of a used needle. Call dispatch at 851-5510.

One of these options should definitely work. Let us know your experiences with them. For some, safely disposing it yourself might be the best option. Be sure

How to Safely Dispose of a Syringe

Safely dispose of it yourself following the below procedures and one of the secure drop points.

- Do not attempt to recap the syringe.
- Use an FDA-approved sharps disposal container. We can provide a container for safe disposal, if your garden does not have one yet.
- Use latex/rubber gloves and, if possible, barbecue tongs.
- Bring the sharps container toward the location of the syringe.
- Place the container firmly on the ground beside the syringe. Do not hold the

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container upright in your hands as you are disposing of the syringe.

- Carefully pick up the syringe by the middle of the barrel.
- Keep the sharp end of the syringe facing away from you at all times.
- Place the syringe in the container, sharp end first, then drop.
- Securely place the lid on the container, holding the container at the top.
- Remove gloves and wash hands thoroughly with soap and water.
- If there are multiple syringes, they should be carefully separated using tongs prior to placing in the container. Do not separate using your hands, shoes, or sticks. Consider calling the police or fire department.
- Discard container at one of many disposal sites throughout Erie County. We have a sheet with all the sites listed, also available here: <http://www2.erie.gov/health/sites/www2.erie.gov.health/files/uploads/pdfs/ESAPsites.pdf>

Good precautionary practice!

Instruct children to inform an adult if they find unsafely disposed syringes. Teach them to never touch needles and syringes they find. Be sure that any gardeners also know to inform you so that proper procedures are followed.

What to do if someone is injured with a used syringe

If someone is injured by a discarded needle and syringe, don't panic. Follow these steps:

- Wash the area gently with soap and running tap water as soon as possible.
- Apply an antiseptic and a clean dressing.
- Immediately contact your doctor or go to the hospital emergency department.
- Safely dispose of the needle following one of the above procedures.