



# SAFETY ALERT

## **The Problem: Syringes and Needles do not go in the Recycling Bin**

Over the last year we have seen a dramatic increase in injuries to our Recyclable Material Recovery Facility employees caused by syringes, needles, lancets and auto-injectors (“Sharps”) mixed in with recyclables. Incidents involving “Sharps” have tripled since 2013. Many municipalities instruct users of “Sharps” to place them in plastic bottles for disposal. However, some users are incorrectly placing such filled plastic bottles in the recycling bin rather than disposing of them properly.

## **The Danger: Our Employees Safety**

The safety of our employees is our utmost concern. Our employees sort recyclables by hand and are in direct contact with every piece of material that is delivered to our Recovery Facilities. When a bottle filled with used “Sharps” is placed in a recycling bin and then compacted in a recycling truck, it typically is empty or broken by the time it gets to a recycling facility, resulting in dozens of “Sharps” being spread throughout the bottles, cans and papers that our employees handle. A batch of “Sharps” from even one plastic bottle can spread throughout a large amount of material, exposing many employees to the risk of puncture wounds, cuts and blood borne diseases.

## **The Consequence: Our Employees Health**

When an employee is injured by a “Sharp”, they are taken immediately for medical evaluation and the entire processing line is brought to a halt. The effects of a prick or cut caused by a “Sharp” can be devastating for the employee and sets in motion an arduous process of testing for diseases that require multiple medical visits over a period of time. In addition to putting all of our workers in harm’s way, such incidents increase operating costs because processing stops to allow safety procedures to be followed by specially trained employees to recover and remove all the contaminants for proper disposal.

## **The Solution: A Clear Message on how to Dispose of Sharps**

For the safety of our employees, it is important that our municipalities and customers publicize proper messaging on how to dispose of all “Sharps” by residents and businesses. Disposal of “Sharps” should be as directed by a pharmacist and in accordance with local disposal regulations and never placed with recyclable material. The proper disposal of sharps will greatly decrease a dangerous condition for our employees.

## **If “Sharps” are placed in a plastic bottle, the bottle should never go in the recycling bin.**

For more information on proper Sharp disposal, contact your local Health Official and visit the U.S. Federal Drug Administration site: <http://1.usa.gov/1Euosh3> or visit [www.safeneedledisposal.org](http://www.safeneedledisposal.org) for information on how to safely dispose of sharps in your area.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jeffrey Fielkow'.

**Jeffrey Fielkow**

Chief Sales & Marketing Officer  
ReCommunity Recycling  
[Jeff.Fielkow@ReCommunity.com](mailto:Jeff.Fielkow@ReCommunity.com)



## PLEASE KEEP NEEDLES OUT OF THE RECYCLING BIN.

Nobody wants to be stuck with a used needle. That's why you can't throw your used needles in the recycling bin or inside a recycled container. Properly throwing away a used needle protects not just your family members and pets, it also protects the recycling and trash workers who help clean our streets and world.

For information on how to dispose of used needles properly, please visit  
<http://www.safeneedledisposal.org>

\*\*"Sharps" is a medical term for devices with sharp points or edges that can puncture or cut skin.

