

Needle and Syringe Safety

What to Do and How to Dispose Properly



Boston is committed to keeping communities clean and healthy by removing needles and syringes and sharing safe disposal information. We take concerns about syringe and needlesticks seriously. Understanding what to do if you come across a syringe or needle can help you feel confident, secure, and keep everyone safe.

What you can do to stay safe:

- Avoid reaching into places you can't see clearly (such as piles of leaves, overgrown bushes, and similar areas).
- Wear shoes with soles to reduce risk of injury.
- Teach children to **never** touch or pick up syringes/needles.
- Stay up to date on vaccinations, especially for hepatitis B.

If someone has a needlestick injury:

- Wash the area immediately with soap and water.
- Call a health care provider right away or go to an emergency room for guidance.

If you find an improperly discarded syringe or needle, call 3-1-1, use the 311 app, or visit [BOSTON.GOV/311](https://boston.gov/311)

The risks of infection from discarded needles:

While most needlestick injuries do not lead to infections, it is still important to contact a health care provider as soon as possible for guidance.

- In the U.S., there have been **no known cases** of HIV transmission from a needlestick injury caused by discarded needles.
- There have been **very rare** cases of hepatitis B and C transmission in these situations.

For more information or if you need to safely dispose of a needle:

You can **contact [3-1-1](tel:311) or [617-635-4500](tel:617-635-4500), download the 311 app, or submit an online request** by scanning the QR code or visiting: **[BOSTON.GOV/311](https://boston.gov/311)**.

The 311 Constituent Service Center is open 24 hours a day.

Adapted from New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and Centers for Disease Control & Prevention

